

**West Kent Partnership
Notes of the meeting 18 January 2007
Kings Hill Conference Centre**

Present

Keith Austin; David Aikman; Tony Bartlett; Penny Chatfield; David Coleman; Michael Cooke; Peter Fleming; Robin Hales; Melvyn Howell; David Hughes; Nazeya Hussain; Steve Leidecker; Niki Luscombe; Alan McKendrick; Mark Raymond; Mark Salisbury; Barbara Thorndick; Sheila Wheeler; Wendy Wood; Mark Worrall; Mandy Wynne; Peter York

Apologies

Nick Chard; Bill Fearon; Clair Fisher; Kate Greenaway; Roger House; Derek McKenzie; Brendan O'Connor; Rosie Serpis; Caroline Shaw; Malcolm Staunton; Simon Wilshaw; Wendy Wilton

Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed guest presenters and other attendees:

- Steve Phoenix, Chief Executive of West Kent PCT – presenting at item 3
- Alison Monk, Deputy Principal, West Kent College, attending in place of Bill Fearon
- Stephen Leidecker, Director of Operations – KCC lead for West Kent
- Tony Bartlett, Enterprise Development Manager, Business Link Kent - joins Partnership as Chairman of AIF Progression group and Enterprise sub group

1. Minutes/Matters Arising

Partnership Analyst Funding (page 3)

Mark Salisbury was invited at the October meeting to consider preparing a joint bid for funding support for a dedicated analyst to analyse data produced across West Kent for all agencies. The analyst would be line-managed by West Kent Police but would service this partnership and stakeholders. Mark has written registering an active interest in a bid to the partnership but wished to defer this pending the resolution of other funding issues.

Action: Bid for analyst to be considered at April meeting

Mark Salisbury

Amendments to Minutes October Meeting

There are some amendments to Page 5 – Learning and Skills – revised page attached to these notes.

Response to Community Hospital Review (page 6)

Due to the reconfiguration of the PCT, the timetable of the review has been rescheduled. There were some concerns that the methodology used to set up the review was not fully aligned with the Fit for Future agenda. Phase one of the review, conducted by an external agency, Tribal, has now been completed which collated the viewpoints of stakeholders. This information will be fed into a more

robust stage 2 which is a financial and economic appraisal. This will be out for consultation in March/April.

Potential Merger – Sevenoaks Volunteer Agency and VAWK

A draft proposal was expected to this meeting, however the feasibility study into the impact of a possible merger between the two organisations is a three month project, due to be completed by the end of February. A final report will go to the trustees of both organisations at end February

Action: a report will be tabled for the April WKP meeting.

Mandy Wynne

Action: Stakeholder surveys are ongoing and partners are invited to fill in the questionnaire which can be found at

All Partners

www.sevenoaksvolunteers.org.uk/Default.asp?page=130

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Presentation – Steve Phoenix, Chief Executive, West Kent PCT

On 1st October 2006 3 Primary Care Trusts were merged together to form the new West Kent PCT. There is a new board with both executive and non-executive members creating a mix of people previously associated with the PCTs and new people. The non-executive Chairman is David Griffiths from Sevenoaks and all non-executive directors live in West Kent.

There are several headline issues for the PCT

1. The biggest issue for the PCT is the inherited financial problems. The former PCTs in the south of West Kent began the year with a financial deficit of £10M and in October it became apparent that Dartford, Gravesham and Swale PCT were exposed to the tune of a further deficit of £19M. This has created an aggregate figure of £29M in the red which although proportionally against a turnover for services of some £750M isn't enormous, as a figure it puts the PCT in the company of the worst performing PCTs from a financial viewpoint. As the £19M deficit has only just come to light it is unrealistic to be able to deal with this overspend within the current financial year. However, a significant reduction on the £29M is expected by end of this financial year, bringing the overspend down to £13-15M. It is anticipated that by the end of the next financial year the problem will have been redressed. It was confirmed that the community hospital review is being conducted outside of the financial recovery process and that review is not expected to generate wider savings for the PCT..

Work is ongoing on a savings plan for 2007/8 and it is 3-4 weeks away from being finalised. The scale of the financial problem is severe but not as great as in West Sussex and Surrey and it is not anticipated that the same level of radical redesign will be required.

2. Plans are in place to reduce spend on management and administration costs by £2.3M by the end of the restructuring which means a 1 in 3 reduction in staff. The PCT is mindful of the impact this will have on individuals who in many cases have made a personal contribution to the

PCTs over many years and wherever possible the reductions are being made by a ban on recruitment.

3. Ongoing service reviews need to be completed – homeopathy, health visitors, community hospitals, orthopaedic/surgery recommendations for Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone hospitals. All of these reviews are high profile.
4. The PCT is looking at being in a position to go out to public consultation on Fit for Future in late spring and will be projecting ahead to funding and service requirements in 2015/16

In answer to a number of questions:

1. The paper with proposals for health visiting will go to the PCT Board next week. Proposals have been adapted in the light of consultations and it is anticipated that the paper will receive board approval, particularly as the Government's national review of health visiting has been prompted by the Minister being impressed by the work around this in West Kent.
2. The Pembury PFI is largely a matter for the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Trust but Steve confirmed that all companies have had the new designs to work to. It is anticipated that the PFI will go ahead.
3. Steve recognised the widespread concern expressed by partners regarding the importance of delivering public health priorities through partnership working. A Director of Public Health has been appointed in conjunction with East Kent PCT and KCC and a Director of Health Improvement will be appointed in West Kent to ensure strong links with all strategic partners, additionally all Directors will have a partnership link to local authorities. Personally, Steve has a strong commitment to and track record in partnership working, however in the current financial context the PCT might not be the easiest of partners over the next 12 months and if requests for money are met with what seems an unhelpful response it is not through any lack of commitment to partnership working but the short term financial restraints.

Community Plan priorities include addressing health and wellbeing issues and concern was expressed that it is difficult to move forward with these without the PCT contributing as a full partner in every sense including allocating financial resource against priorities. In response to a concern that the existing partnership working might be undermined and the benefits established lost, Steve reiterated that the PCT is committed to working creatively and enthusiastically with partners to maintain, rationalise and improve the partnership working and that it is anticipated that within 18 months the financial position will have been resolved and funds can be directed towards partnership working.

4. Staff morale is low, but most staff are frontline and their jobs are not under threat, however they are obviously affected by the organisational changes and uncertainty with structures etc. By the end of this financial year there will be stability within the organisation.
5. The decision taken earlier on in the year to cease referrals to the homeopathic hospital in Tunbridge Wells has been reversed in order to

complete a transparent review of the effectiveness of homeopathy as a treatment. GPs have been asked to look critically at the referrals they make and homeopathic and patient groups are being consulted. The annual spend on homeopathy is £200K and although this is not a large figure in an overall turnover of £750M it does need to be justified. A consultation document is anticipated in March or April.

6. In answer to the point that the K.C.C Overview & Scrutiny committee have rejected the Fit for Future proposals, Steve commented that when the PCT Board receives the outcome of the consultation at a meeting on 22 February, they will take account of all views of those who have been involved in the consultation, including the K.C.C Overview & Scrutiny committee. There is some work to be done between now and that meeting to see if the concerns raised in consultation can be addressed and the proposals finessed ahead of the meeting. The final decision is with the PCT Board, unless the Overview & Scrutiny Committee decide to refer the Board's decision to the Secretary of State.
7. Both the PFI and Fit for Future work has explored demographics and potential demand for services. For example, Maidstone Hospital will grow as a centre for cancer care.
8. In response to a concern about reported poor communication between League of Friends volunteers and PCT staff and negative press for the PCT, Steve commented that the work of the League of Friends was hugely appreciated, the PCT website would be improved as soon as organisational capacity allows and that the PCT will work on a more constructive relationship with the press.
9. **Action: Mandy Wynne to set up meeting between Steve and volunteer centre managers in West Kent to begin the process of strategic planning for the most effective use of volunteers within the PCT.**

Mandy
Wynne

3. Presentation – Age Concern Malling – Keith Austin

The Partnership received a presentation from Keith Austin of Age Concern Malling on the work of Age Concern

Age Concern is a National Charity. However, the national charity provides no direct services for the elderly but is a government lobbying organisation. Each local Age Concern is an independent charity which has to raise funds to provide services according to local needs. There are 33 Age Concerns in Kent.

Malling Age Concern provides a range of services to 200 clients a week across a largely rural area. With a part time staff equivalent to 10 full time posts the following services are undertaken:

- Day care
- Day care for those with mental health needs
- Pop in service (provided under Brighter Futures Project*)
- Shopping service (provided under Brighter Futures Project)

- Foot care and chiropody (provided on behalf of PCT, future funding not guaranteed)
- In-home bathing service
- Hairdressing
- Information and advice
- Help with benefit claims (often provided at home)
- Two holidays a year and monthly outings

The Budget for all services is £250K pa. Grants from KCC Social Services cover 48% of costs to provide day care and other services which are vital to promoting independent living. An additional 10% is received from borough and parish councils and organisations such as Rotary. The balance of 42% has to be raised by charging clients for services, selling products for over 50's and fundraising.

* The Brighter Futures Project is government funded and run by KCC to promote independent living.

Age Concern Malling faces problems of ever increasing demand for services, difficulties in fund raising in that charities for the elderly are not as attractive to potential donors as other charities and the capital expenditure required for mini buses and general under funding. The profile desperately needs to be raised and support from local businesses secured.

There was discussion surrounding the issue of business engagement with local charities. Businesses receive many direct approaches and many requests go unanswered. It was suggested that the voluntary group as a sector need to demonstrate to business how they can help businesses to develop their CSR Agenda which in turn will provide business benefits.

Some discussions regarding the interaction and joint working across the 33 Age Concerns in Kent took place, in terms of them examining the potential for joint procurement, back office alignment, fundraising and training. Local branches of Age Concern combine forces to work together on projects and meetings with KCC are in groups of 6-8. Plans for a larger, WK grouping are being considered. Expertise, such as filling in benefit claims are shared between branches.

Action: Tony Bartlett and Keith Austin to meet to discuss how BLK might be able to help the development of Age Concern as a social enterprise.

Tony Bartlett/
Keith Austin

There was some discussion surrounding payments to KCC for attendance allowance claims received and that these claims are often facilitated by Age Concern. KCC consider Age Concern a major partner in care provision for the elderly and welcome the steps that are being taken towards rationalisation and greater collaboration whilst recognising their strength in meeting local needs at a local level. The third sector has a very real role to play in moving forward on the preventative health agenda and Age Concern demonstrating added value could impact on potential funding from KCC.

4. **Change of Chairmanship**

Mark Worrall thanked partners for their support over the period of his Chairmanship during which time West Kent had begun to speak with one voice through the partnership.

Melvyn Howell thanked Mark Worrall for his commitment to the partnership and commended him for his skill as a Chairman which had been outstanding.

5. **Co-ordinator's Report**

Wendy asked partners to let her know of any changes to the membership lists at Paper A. An updated version is attached to these notes.

The appraisal group appraised two projects and recommend that during discussion of bids at partnership meetings the applicant, if present, be invited to leave the room. This is because for some bids the applicant is not from a body represented on the partnership and it was felt there should be a level playing field.

Current funding available for projects stands at £39,470 and If both of the bids are approved it will leave project funding of £13,090

Small Business Ambassadors

Action: The partnership agreed that this was a well presented bid and it was fully endorsed and approved.

Give and Gain Employee Volunteering

Action: The partnership agreed that this bid should receive full support and approved the bid.

6. **VAWK**

The half yearly report on Project Funding will follow.

7. **Events/Consultations**

- **Kent Partnership Conference**

Niki Luscombe circulated the Kent Partnership Annual Report which was launched at the November conference explaining that the document was also a celebration of collaboration and partnership working. The afternoon workshop sessions focussed on the Kent Agreement. Indicators are moving in the right direction broadly speaking and are overseen by the sub groups.

The Kent Partnership is now consulting on the next Kent Agreement with a view to setting strategic targets through a collaborative approach at community level.

Melvyn Howell, as the West Kent representative on the Kent Partnership highlighted that the targets for the next Kent Agreement

will be more stretching and that pooling of resources under the LAA could be as much as ten times greater than under the current Agreement. It is essential that targets are clearly defined – for example, the current target on primary school attendance cannot differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absences.

Mark Salisbury endorsed the need for realistic target setting and informed the meeting that Outcome 10 had now been amended to reflect true crime statistics. He also made the link between targets and resourcing, explaining that the funding for PCSO's had been reduced throughout Kent. Although he had managed to negotiate a deficit of only 10 officers in West Kent, this will necessarily impact on the delivery against targets.

Action: Letter to be sent from the Chairman to Government on funding cuts. This to be linked to comprehensive spending review – Niki Luscombe to make connections

Chairman

N Luscombe

Mark also pointed out that in relation to funding streams the partnership should be watchful not to be a victim of our own success. From 07/08 funding for policing will be through LAA rather than direct from Government and the Safer and Stronger Communities sub group of the Kent Partnership will be making the financial decisions.

- **SDC Action Plan**

Robin Hales updated the meeting on the Sevenoaks District Community Action Plan which had been sent to all partners as part of the consultation process.

Action: Final draft to be brought to the April meeting.

Robin Hales

8. Sub Group Updates

There were no papers from Health as a result of the reconfiguration and both the learning and skills groups have not met since the last WKP meeting.

Learning and Skills

Bill Fearon had asked that the meeting be informed that both he and Malcolm Staunton are involved today in West Kent College's application to the National LSC Committee for funding the rebuild of the Brook Street campus. The college was successful recently at the 'In Principle' application stage in securing the approval of the local (LSCKM) Council. At present the total cost of the new campus is circa £65m. In Principle approval is critical as it effectively 'earmarks' funds for the project.

Today the task is to convince the National LSC Council of the value of the WKC bid. If successful it then progresses to the final 'detailed' stage of application for funds later in the year.

Bill states that the fact that WKC are asking for substantial funds for the West Kent region is causing some to question the need for such investment in a

relatively affluent area such as ours compared to other more disadvantaged parts of the country. This is a challenge Partnership members will recognise.

Alison Monk commented that West Kent does have a significant number of young people who fail to attain 5+ GCSE passes at grades A-C and that of the 2000+ learners post 16 at West Kent College, 750 are claiming EMA allowance demonstrating that they are from lower income families.

The Chairman expressed the Partnership's strong support for the application.

Economic

Tony Bartlett has chaired the AIF Progression Group through the revision of the AIF and now joins the partnership to Chair the newly formed Economic Group which replaces the business development group and AIF Progression Group. The Economic group has responsibility for Strategic Objective 3 in the AIF – Sustain and Strengthen the Local Economy – and also has responsibility for the work of the sub and task groups – landbased, marketing and Voice for Business as well as overseeing the AIF.

Tony emphasised the priority of engaging better with the business community and that the Voice for Business Group, being chaired by Roger House, will feed the concerns and aspirations of the business community into the economy sub group which can establish if there are ways such issues can be addressed.

There will be a report on progress on priorities for action to the April meeting and the economy group is developing a transparent and simple process by which sub group chairs can reflect progress made to the partnership.

Housing

Barbara Thorndick reported that although the housing sub group has not met as a full group for 6 months, the 3 district and borough housing officers have been working up a full regional housing strategy. A draft has been produced and the intention is to take this back to members in early summer before the bidding round starts. Our cross boundary approach is very strong.

Transport

Robin Hales reported that Derek McKenzie who has recently chaired the group is leaving shortly. An interim chair has been appointed but longer term he looked to KCC to provide a Chair at an appropriate level to lead the transport sub group forwards and feed into this group.

Action: KCC to nominate appropriate Chair for Transport Sub Group

S Leidecker

9. Any Other Business

Sheila Wheeler explained that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has commissioned a review of the interaction between its community plan and the West Kent Partnership. Some interviews will take place over the 22nd and 23rd March 07 and some partners may be contacted to participate. Sheila will notify those people in advance. A briefing document to partners was circulated and is also attached to these Minutes.

10. Dates of Next Meetings

Please note that meeting dates have not changed but that meetings will continue to be held at Kings Hill Conference Centre.

- Thursday 26 April, 10am, Kings Hill Conference Centre
- Thursday 19 July, 10am, Kings Hill Conference Centre
- Thursday 25 October, 10am, Kings Hill Conference Centre

West Kent Partnership updated 24 January 2007**Private Sector**

Alan Mckendrick	CEO	Aylesford Newsprint
Rosie Serpis	HR Development Manager	AXA-PPP

Business Support

Roger House	SE Chair	FSB *
Tony Bartlett (new)	Enterprise Development Mgr	Business Link Kent *

Public Sector

Melvyn Howell (Chairman)	Leader	Tunbridge Wells BC
Mark Worrall	Leader	Tonbridge & Malling BC
David Aikman	Cllr	Tonbridge & Malling BC
David Hughes	CEO	Tonbridge & Malling BC
*		
Sheila Wheeler	CEO	Tunbridge Wells BC
Robin Hales	CEO	Sevenoaks DC
Peter Fleming	Leader	Sevenoaks DC
Barbara Thorndick	CEO	West Kent Housing *
Brendan O'Connor	Director Public Health	South West Kent PCT
Mark Salisbury	Area Commander	West Kent Police
Simon Wilshaw	Inspector	West Kent Police
Nick Chard	Member	Kent County Council
Steven Leidecker	Director Ops, WK	Kent County Council
Niki Luscombe	Public Service Board Liason	Kent Partnership
Wendy Wilton	Director	Kent Learning Pship *
Malcolm Staunton		Learning & Skills Council

Community & Voluntary Sector

Caroline Shaw	CEO	Voluntary Action West
Kent		
Penny Chatfield		HomeStart West Kent
Mandy Wynne	CEO	Sevenoaks Volunteers
Keith Austin		Age Concern Malling
Michael Cooke		Soaks Churches Togeth
David Coleman		Kent Assn of Parish Cnls
Peter York (new)	Chairman	West Kent Civic Trust

Observers

Kate Greenaway	SEEDA
Clair Fisher	GOSE

Officer co-ordinating Group

Mark Raymond	Corporate Services Mgr	Tonbridge & Malling BC
tba		Sevenoaks DC
Nazeya Hussain	Head Com & Corp Planning	Tunbridge Wells BC
Tom Phillips	Community Liaison Officer	Kent County Council
Wendy Wood	WKP Co-ordinator	

* sub or task group chair

SUB GROUPS**Transport**

Chair (tba)	KCC
Steve Pay	KCC Public Transport
Anne Marie Hannam	Kent Highways (West)
Andy Smart	Kent Highways (Mid)
Mike McCulloch	TMBC
Lene Benyon	TWBC
Malcolm Spalding	Arriva Southern counties
Mike Gibson/Nigel Jarrett	South Eastern Trains

Economic (and AIF)

Tony Bartlett (Chair)	Business Link Kent
Mark Raymond	TMBC
Daryl Jones	TWBC
Denise Eden-Green	Kent Economic Board
Emily Haswell	KCC
Wendy Wood	WKP
Roger House	Fed Small Businesses
Derek Mckenzie	SDC
Mandy Bearne	Locate in Kent

Housing

Barbara Thorndick (Chair)	West Kent Housing Association
Claire Martin	KCC
Geraldine Harrington	Town & Country Housing Group
John Rosser	Town & Country Housing Group
Pat Smith	SDC
Mark Raymond	TMBC
Lawrence Dey	TMBC
David Crosby	TWBC
Gill Harris	TWBC
Stephanie Bollenhickman	TWBC
Anthony Cross	Russet Homes
Vivien Knibbs	Moat Housing Association

Learning and Skills**The WK Skills Forum 19+**

Wendy Wilton (Chair)	Kent Learning Federation
Malcolm Staunton	LSC
Bill Fearon	West Kent College
Paul Hannan	Hadlow College
Sue Ricketts	Kent Adult Education Service
Emily Haswell	KCC
Richard Green	Business Link Kent
Daryl Jones	TWBC
Sue Mcleod	Mid Kent College
Caroline Shaw	VAWK

Caron Akehurst

LSC

14-19 Review and Planning Forum

Martin Absolom	Oakley School:
Angela Agopian	Instant Muscle
Nigel Blackburn	The Hayesbrook School:
Stephen Bovey	Hillview School
John Daly	The Wildernesse School
Pippa Doran	Kent County Council:
Claire Ellis	Learning and Skills Council Kent and Medway
Vanessa Everett	Mascalls School
Bill Fearon	West Kent College
Sally Keverne	Kent County Council
Mark Gorringe	Connexions Kent and Medway
Paul Hannan	Hadlow College
Chris Lay	Kent County Council
Rosemary Martin	Combe Bank School
Jackie Matthais	West Kent Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Rosemary Olivier	St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive School
Val Spinks	West Kent Learning Federation
Daryl Jones	TWBC

Health Policy (to follow)**TASK GROUPS (report into Economic group)****Marketing**

Mandy Bearne (Chair)	Locate in Kent
Jackie Mathias	West Kent Chamber of Commerce
Ruth Wood	KCC
Linda Moreau	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Juliet Steinmetz	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Sarah Knight	Creative Revolution
Wendy Wood	West Kent Partnership

Landbased

Paul Hannan (Chair)	Hadlow College
Adam Ellis-Jones	Produced in Kent
Caroline Shaw	VAWK
Daryl Jones	TWBC
Carolyn Mckenzie	KCC
Diana Lock	KCC
Emily Haswell	KCC
Paul Draycott	Business Link Kent
Richard Green	Business Link Kent
Stuart Gibbons	KCC
Sue Ricketts	KCC
Wendy Wilton	Kent Learning Partnership
Mark Raymond	TMBC
Tba	SDC
Tony Atkinson	KCC

Private Enterprise – following to be invited on

Roger House (Chair)	FSB/Big Solutions
Frank McConnell	Swanley Chamber of Commerce
To be advised	FSB rep
To be advised	Institute of Directors
Tony Bartlett	Business Link Kent
Ian Scott	Penshurst Place
Denise Eden-Green	KEB
to be advised	a rural business
to be advised	a large retail business
Rosie Serpis	AXA PPP
Alison Mortimer	small businessperson
To be advised	a Swanley Business
To be advised	a Kings Hill Business
To be advised	selection - businesses at Kent Business Awards
SEEDA rep	The Hop Farm

Corrections to October Minutes – page 5

Learning and Skills

Wendy Wilton commented that both the adult and 14-19 groups have been focused on developing their remits and both have provided action plans which show progress.

The 14-19 group has been focussed on the development of the 14-19 vocational diplomas and working on a detailed bid. There is an option for a limited number of consortiums nationally to bid to be gateways to deliver the 14 specialised diplomas. This is increasingly contentious as there are differing views on the worth of the new diplomas. The Government view is for a greater emphasis on vocational training at all levels. The debate is around whether the diplomas will actually do what is intended in providing level 3 and 4 craftsmen and women and technicians. There are some concerns that the diplomas are more akin to A levels. The West Kent Learning Federation is putting in a bid for a Gateway. Kent **may secure only 2 – 3 Gateways**. The application will go to KCC to review and will then be sent on to a regional panel.

The 19+ Forum will hold a half day planning session when it next meets to align planning and funding so resources are best used to support the least advantaged areas. The group particularly want to align services to ensure agencies are not competing but working co-operatively.

Train to Gain provides free training to employees without a level 2 qualification.

Enrolments at both Hadlow and West Kent College are over target. The new West Kent College campus will **continue to support a wide range of students and courses and will** be developed as a Centre of Excellence for people with special needs and physical disabilities – both youth and adults. West Kent College is already partnered with Dorton College and 30-40 sight impaired students come to West Kent College and are integrated in a variety of courses. Dorton College and **the local specialist schools** will be **invited to contribute to** the development plans and work with architects.

The Chairman welcomed Malcolm Staunton to the partnership. Malcolm commented that considerable progress has been made on outreach facilities in more deprived areas and an outreach centre is now situated at the Sports Centre in Edenbridge in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council and West Kent College. Conversations are ongoing with Wildernesse and Tunbridge Wells High School.

To West Kent Partnership
Report Title LSP Peer Challenge
From Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Date 18 January 2007

Background

The recent Local Government White paper -Strong and Prosperous Communities sets out a number of recommendations in terms of strengthening strategic partnership arrangements, and the role of members in place shaping.

It is within this strategic context, that Tunbridge Wells proposes a review of its relationship with the West Kent Partnership, in the context of our local Community Plan Partnership. The review will seek to examine the effectiveness of the relationship and how we achieve synergy between the two partnerships, to ensure we are placed to meet the changing agenda in a very complex environment.

Role of Members

The White Paper provides a clear aim of enhancing the role of members in terms of strategic leadership and place shaping. As part of this role, a number of recommendations are put forward:

1. Placing a duty on local authorities to prepare LAA in consultation with others as is already the case with the Sustainable Community Strategy;
2. Local authority leaders will play a leading role on LSPs- with an opportunity to agree the chair of the LSP;
3. placing a duty on local authority and named partners to co-operate with each other to agree targets in the LAA; and
4. streamlining procedures for involving communities in the creation of Sustainable Community Strategies, LAA and other strategic documents.

This provides a renewed focus on the role of elected members in strategic partnerships and the demonstrable impact of the LSP to local communities.

Strengthening the LSP

The LSP continues to be seen as the main vehicle in transforming places and opportunities for local residents, with responsibility for setting the strategic vision for an area and co-ordinating delivery of outcomes.

Strong emphasis is placed on strengthening the involvement of elected members in the LSP, with an expectation on securing buy in and support from all partners in delivering the LAA and the Sustainable Community Plan, as well as addressing cross cutting issues.

West Kent Partnership

The West Kent Partnership was established in December 2001 and has been successful in establishing strong partnership working across West Kent. Work such as the Area Investment Framework has been important in setting out the cross cutting issues for West Kent and continues to drive forward the economic development agenda for the area.

In addition to the strategic direction set out in the White Paper, the following will have an impact on LSP's in 2007 and beyond:

1. The Lyons Review and the likely settlement from the Comprehensive Spending Review for local authorities may not see result in any real increase in resources;
2. the forthcoming recommendations from the cross Government Third Sector Review is likely to set out an enhanced role for the community and voluntary sector in delivering mainstream services;
3. the new LAA contract with central government will set key priorities and see the pooling of many stream of funding and a new performance management framework and
4. the health economy in West Kent is likely to continue to be under pressure in terms of addressing the financial situation;

Tunbridge Wells is therefore proposing to undertake a review of its role in the West Kent Partnership, and it's the relationship with the Community Plan Partnership to ensure it is placed to respond to this wider context.

The LSP Peer Review

Tunbridge Wells have approached SOLACE, I&DeA and Warwick Business School to undertake the peer review.

The review will be undertaken over a two-day period and will be undertaken by a Peer Challenge Team consisting of five people including:

- A serving chief executive or other senior officer with experience of supporting an LSP
- A council leader or other senior member with experience of supporting an LSP
- Two people from other agencies represented on the LSP (the voluntary sector and SEEDA)
- A facilitator from either SOLACE/ I&DeA / Warwick Business School, who will lead the team.

Process

The process consists of two parts, firstly a self assessment which need to be submitted prior to the visit, followed by two-days of interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders involved in the LSP.

Self Assessment

A self-assessment needs to be completed and submitted prior to the visit, against which the team will conduct the review. The self-assessment needs to address the following themes:

- Achievement and Impact
- Vision and Strategy
- Leadership and Relationships
- Governance and Performance

Interviews and Focus Groups

The Interviews and focus groups will take place over the following two days -22nd – 23rd March 2007.

The Review Team will gather information through a number of methods:

- One to one interviews and small group interviews
- Telephone interviews
- Focus Groups (e.g. for service managers from different partners agencies or voluntary and community sector representatives)
- Site visits (to understand a major issue that is being tackled by the LSP, or which demonstrates an outcome for local people)
- Participating in or viewing meetings (as appropriate)

The Review Team will need to interview colleagues from across the LSP and in some cases to speak to individuals within their respective organisations.

The guidance request the following are available to be interviewed/ take part in a focus group:

- Chair of the LSP
- Chief Executives and Leaders of the local authorities
- Cross section of local authority members
- Representative of partners agencies involved in the LSP (individual interviews)
- Voluntary sector representatives and representative from specialist groups such REC
- Elected Members involved in LSP
- Group of operational managers from across the agencies involved in the LSP
- Selection of frontline staff from across agencies involved in the LSP
- Relevant external stakeholders
- Finance Officer
- Focus Groups of citizens

Recommendations

1. The WKP supports the Tunbridge Wells LSP Peer Review, which will examine the authorities role and contribution to the WKP, in a changing and complex environment.
2. That all partners note interviews and focus group discussion will take place on 22nd - 23rd March 2007 and agree to take part as necessary.
3. Agree that the WKP Officer Co-ordination Group develops the self-assessment for the review.