

West Kent Partnership
Notes of the meeting 20 January 2006
The Angel Centre, Tonbridge

Present: Bill Fearon, Brendan O'Connor, David Coleman, David Aikman, David Hughes, Penny Chatfield, Mark Raymond, Pat Smith (representing Barbara Thorndick), Lesley Bowles (representing Merle Bigden), Mark Worrall, Maureen Pullen, Melvyn Howell, Michael Cooke, Sheila Wheeler, Simon Wilshaw, Tom Phillips, Wendy Wilton, Wendy Wood

Guests: Peter Horne, Eamonn Dillon, Liz McCutcheon, Loic Flory

Apologies: Alan McKendrick, Barbara Thorndick, Merle Bigden, Peter Fleming, Declan O'Neill, Robin Hales, Roger House, Janet Hughes, Jeremy Price, Kate Greenaway, Mandy Wynne, Nick Chard, Rosie Serpis, Tony Fullwood

Chairman's Opening Remarks

Janet Hughes has written to the Chairman explaining that she will no longer be attending these meetings and that Steve Leidecker, Director Operations - West Kent Adult Services, will attend in future. Thanks were recorded to Janet for her contribution and the Chairman will write to her.

M Worrall

1. Minutes/Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

- Stephanie Holt, newly appointed Olympics manager at KCC will present to our next meeting
- The Chairman has sent letters as minuted.

2. Co-ordinator's Financial Report – Paper A

- There is still funding available for appropriate projects
- **The Chairman requested that all local authorities confirm that funding has been allocated in their budgets for the next financial year**

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/TWBC

3. Priority Communities – Paper B – Eamonn Dillon

There have been three meetings over the last 6 months. There is a broad membership of the group and a lot of work has gone on in between the meetings. It has been difficult to establish what to focus on across all three authorities which does not duplicate existing activity but fills identified gaps in provision. Decisions are now needed on how to take forward. One possibility would be to engage a bid writer to access funding if a consensus can be reached on which projects would be suitable to take forward in this way.

There was discussion around potential projects. Any suitable project would need to have a common denominator across all the priority communities and at the same time be able to make a difference at a very local level with a clear objective to enable people to help themselves. A clear idea of outcomes and

how these would be measured was also agreed to be important as was the need to link to district community plans.

- The outline development proposal suggests peripatetic youth work and a support worker could possibly be a shared resource to work in the priority communities across all three districts if funding could be found.
- Preventing homelessness in 16-19 year old age group was also agreed to be a significant issues across all 3 districts
- Two linked issues both recognised in the paper, that of homelessness and mental health in the 16-19 year old age group are not necessarily issues restricted to the priority communities. Sir John Stanley had written to local public sector bodies pointing out the gap in provision of suitable housing for young people with mental health difficulties and this will be being addressed, co-ordinated by David Hughes. There is scope to build a project covering young people across the whole West Kent area.

Several projects underway by other agencies were highlighted by partners

- Connexions are looking to develop a package to support looked after children once they reach the age of 16 and LA support is withdrawn
- The 3 districts are working together on a number of housing initiatives
 - Homelessness review underway
 - Supported lodgers scheme
 - Mediation scheme with The Bridge Trust to avoid homelessness

It was agreed that Eamonn Dillon and Mark Raymond would give further consideration to the need to focus on specific projects under the above themes. This would involve engagement with key delivery partners. It was agreed that the regeneration sub group might need to be reconvened in the near future to underpin the delivery of any project.

MRaymond
/E Dillon

There will be a report brought to the April WKP meeting.

3. Community Plan Updates

Tunbridge Wells – Plan is being refreshed and a meeting held earlier this week. Now in the consultation period with the revised plan to be agreed by Council about September.

Tonbridge & Malling – Community strategy consultation largely completed with a draft strategy and action plan going to members in February. Further consultation with key partners would then be undertaken and a final draft of plan will be brought to April meeting of WKP.

Sevenoaks – Looking forward to the next three year plan with one more year to run on the current action plan. The LDF and the community plan being developed together with some adjustments on the community plan consultation so that both can be undertaken together. There will be a partners development day in February to ensure all agencies' priorities are included. The two large developments at West Kent Cold Store and Horton Kirby are integrated with the community plan and the partnership is working

with the developers to ensure local consultation. The latest monitoring of the action plan is available on the SDC community plan website.

5. Presentation – Peter Horne, South West Kent PCT – Sexual Health

The presentation is attached. This highlighted the facts surrounding sexual health, particularly in the 16-24 year old group and the significant threat posed by Chlamydia. Members of the partnership were asked to consider how their organisations could help reach this age group either directly or through parents, and inform them of the importance of screening for Chlamydia and whether they could provide testing sites for screening. This affects 1 in 10 and in women and there are often no symptoms. Treatment is simple but left untreated it can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility. Partners were also asked to consider how their organisations can normalise sexual health information in the same way as for example, smoking cessation, perhaps by condom machines in toilets, messages on payslips, posters and including sexual health in well-person checks.

all

all

Widening education on sexual health in schools is also important and support of such initiatives is very important. There is often resistance by Governors/Heads to the school nurse providing a clinic but in one local school where this has been introduced there have been no complaints received from parents whatsoever and the initiative is widely welcomed.

The difficult group to reach with information is young men and Bill Fearon suggested that the drug awareness module run in conjunction with the police, that all full-time students are required to attend at WKC and which is proving most effective, could be extended to encompass sexual health presented in an interesting 'sex, drugs and rock and roll' awareness format.

It was also suggested that sexual health could be 'mainstreamed' through leisure centres wellness courses.

The PCT is developing a kit which can be taken to organisations to promote health screening.

It was suggested that a phone number should be widely publicised which would provide confidential help and advice on sexual health matters. Peter Horne will feedback to the partnership on this.

P Horne

Peter invited partner organisations to contact him directly for guidance on how to deliver these important sexual health messages - Peter.horne@swkentpct.nhs.uk

All

The Health sub group were asked to indicate in the update to the next meeting how partner organisations had responded to these issues.

D Hughes

The Joint Public Health Annual Report defines the priorities for health action for partners across South of West Kent. **It was agreed that it would be useful for partners to receive a short presentation by Brendan O'Connor on the report to the April meeting**

B O'Connor

6. Sub Group Updates

Business Development – Paper C

Mark Raymond reported for Roger House. The group has been engaged on 2 projects. The home-based businesses project is now looking at a programme to deliver IT support and a very useful meeting has been held with WKC and Hadlow College. A business plan will now be written to test viability and to use in support of funding bids to SEEDA and others.

The AIF review is now at the action planning stage. The need for two new working groups has been identified, the first to look at promoting West Kent and the second to focus on the land-based sector. The scope of the Business Development sub group is also likely to be expanded as part of this review. **The final draft AIF review document will be brought to the April meeting.**

Learning and Skills (West Kent Skills Forum (19+) – Paper D

The meeting discussed the name of the group which remains West Kent Skills Forum 19+. **It was decided that whilst this group has an overall brief to report into the WKP on all learning and skills issues both pre and post 19, the issues for the 14-19 age group will be tackled through the WK14-19 Review and Planning Forum.** Several people sit on both groups and a co-ordinated stance and overview will be taken by the members of the West Kent Skills Forum (19+) in respect of reporting to the WKP and delivering AIF objectives.

The West Kent Skills Forum are currently assessing and re-working the Priorities for Action under AIF Strategic Objective 2 *Maximise opportunities for individuals to enhance their skills*. Once this exercise is completed then many of the members of the previous, much larger, learning and skills group, will be invited to join appropriate working groups to take projects forward.

There was some discussion surrounding young people leaving the area to pursue a university education and then not returning. It was felt that whilst this is normal across the country, many areas also have students moving in to study at HE institutions and that there are fewer opportunities for this in West Kent. It was pointed out that there are a number of HE courses available both at WKC and Hadlow but that the high cost of housing is a barrier to attracting people to move into the area to study.

Bill Fearon confirmed that WKC had just received Action for Business College kite mark status and is one of only 8 colleges in the country to have this accreditation.

Housing (Paper E)

Pat Smith reported on behalf of Barbara Thorndick. West Kent have recently lost out on two bids. Implicit in Barbara's report is that East Kent are working effectively together on housing issues and have a good profile. The West Kent profile is lower and that is primarily why we are losing out on bids. Pat suggested that the negatives could be turned into positives and that this was the way forward.

The three districts recognise the merits of sub regional working together with KCC, GOSE and the Housing Corporation. The paper produced on a sub regional housing strategy was well received by GOSE and a project group will be set up to decide how to take this forward.

The bid for money to help with reducing homeless cases in temporary accommodation by 50% was unsuccessful because a greater need was perceived in the London authorities and the bid for CBL was unsuccessful because full member approval was not in place. Indicative approval as given in the East/Mid Kent bid would have been sufficient.

It is essential to keep up the momentum on sub regional working and Robin Hales will be speaking to both Sheila Wheeler and David Hughes to agree how the 3 districts wish to pursue a further bid on choice based lettings. The options are to join the seven district East/Mid Kent scheme, put in a further WK only bid or thirdly to tailor a WK bid so that it would dovetail with the East/Mid Kent scheme.

A brochure on the affordable housing scheme now being built in Tonbridge was circulated. This initiative is the first scheme specifically aimed at essential workers following on from the study completed last year. The intention from WKHA is to attract capital investment from local businesses in return for some nomination rights over the accommodation. The indicative costs of a 25% shared option scheme to the occupant (ie, rent and mortgage together) is £400 a month for a one-bed flat and £500 a month for a 2-bed flat which demonstrates how affordable the scheme is likely to be for the target group of essential workers.

Transport – Paper F

Sheila Wheeler reported that a key date is 1 February when the impact of the Government's settlement for the provisional Local Transport Plan Bid will be considered by the sub group.

The Department for Transport have announced that the Integrated Kent Franchise is to be awarded to GoVia. The franchisee is to be in place by 1 April 2006.

Health – Paper G

David Hughes reported on the ongoing work of the Health Policy Board. The Choosing Health funding will be split approximately 40% for community initiatives and 60% for national programmes of which 40% would be on sexual health.

South West Kent and Maidstone and Weald PCTs have been undertaking joint working for over a year and now have joint management teams and a joint Chief Executive. However, there is now a government proposal to re-organise further with three options being considered – the first to have one PCT for Medway and another covering the rest of Kent, or an option of 3 PCTs across Kent within one option including Ashford in West Kent and the other including it within East Kent. There is a CEOs consultation event at Ashford International Hotel on 20 February and an event for voluntary groups on 23 February at Tonbridge Castle. Diane Beecham at South West Kent

PCT is co-ordinating both events. **Brendan O'Connor's view that the current structure works well was endorsed by the meeting.**

7. **Presentation – Vision for Kent Consultation – Liz McCutcheon**

The powerpoint presentation is attached. The Vision for Kent online consultation closes on 27th January but consultation continues until 17th February.

There was some concern expressed at the limited number of words allocated to districts to describe their area. Liz suggested that if districts were unhappy with the wording used they can supply alternative wording but no more space would be available. However, the on-line document will have the facility to link to district web pages and contain an interactive map. The Kent Partnership website also has the facility to have more information on districts and Liz would be happy for feed through anything supplied by the districts.

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8 **Any Other Business**

Regional Economic Strategy – a draft regional strategy has been published by SEEDA. Mark Raymond offered to gather together responses on behalf of the WKP by the deadline of 17 February if partners felt this to be appropriate. **Partners to submit any comments to MR by 10th February.**

MRaymond/
All

LSP Consultation - Responses are invited by 3rd March. It was agreed that it would be appropriate for each authority to make their own response. In addition, partners were invited to supply any specific West Kent views to Wendy Wood. It was pointed out that none of the models described in the consultation document are like the WKP and each authority may wish to comment on this in their individual responses and ask for a view on WKP as a model for joint working.

SDC/TMBC/
TWBC/KCC

If any common themes emerge on both consultations, then the WKP will endorse areas where there is agreement.

9. **Dates Next Meetings**

- Friday 28 April
- Friday 16 June
- Friday 14 July
- Friday 20 October