



HARROW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7 August 2008

(1) Present:

Harrow Strategic Partnership Board Members:

Councillor David Ashton (Chairman)	Leader; Strategy, Partnership and Finance Portfolio Holder	Harrow Council
Councillor Susan Hall	Deputy Leader, Environment and Community Safety Portfolio Holder	Harrow Council
Councillor Bill Stephenson	Leader of the Labour Group	Harrow Council
Dr Gillian Schiller (Vice- Chairman)	Chairman	Harrow Primary Care Trust
Neil Tornes	Kodak Limited	Business Sector Representative
Mike Coker		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Kris Fryer		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Yvonne Lee		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Dr Mhaden		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Julia Smith	Chief Executive, Harrow Association of Voluntary Service	Voluntary and Community Sector
Michael Lockwood	Chief Executive	Harrow Council
Also present: Chris Marland (deputising for Malcolm Parr)	Harrow In Business	Business Sector Representative

(2) The following Harrow Officers attended:-

Andrea Durn	Service Manager- Performance	Harrow Council
Andrew Howe	Interim Director	Harrow PCT
Mike Howes	Service Manager, Policy and Partnership Service	Harrow Council
Trina Taylor	Senior Policy Officer, Policy and Partnership Service	Harrow Council
Tom Whiting	Assistant Chief Executive	Harrow Council
Paul Williams	Service Manager – Risk Management	Harrow Council

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor Phillip O'Dell (Deputy Leader of the Labour Group) (Harrow Council), Dr Karim Murji (Metropolitan Police Authority) (Metropolitan Police Authority), Howard Bluston (North West London Chamber of Commerce) (Business Sector Representative), Julie Browne (Voluntary and Community Sector Representative), Professor Simon Jarvis (University of Westminster) (Higher Education Representative), Richard Walton (Borough Commander, Harrow Police) (Metropolitan Police Service) and Allen Pluck (Harrow In Business) (Business Sector Representative)

ACTION

152. Membership:

It was noted that in the recent voluntary and community sector elections there had been a tie for fourth place. It was agreed, in the light of the new governance arrangements about to be instituted, that the membership of the voluntary and community sector be increased to five representatives.

All to note

The Chairman welcomed Yvonne Lee and Dr Mhaden to their first meeting of the Partnership. Kris Fryer, Mike Coker and Julie Browne were congratulated on their reappointment.

153. Apologies:

Apologies were received.

154. Minutes:

AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2008, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

155. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

156. Championing Harrow:

An update on Championing Harrow was received by the Board. The Board expressed disappointment that an officer was not present to respond to any questions.

It was noted that a 'Flying the Flag' Olympic Handover was being held on 24 August 2008 during which an Olympic flag would be raised at the Civic Centre. It was suggested that all Partners receive prompt notification of the event.

AGREED: That (1) the update be noted; and

(2) all Partners be promptly notified of the 'Flying the Flag' event.

LM/All to
note

157. Aiming High for Disabled Children:

A report from the Primary Care Trust was received which outlined the work being undertaken by the PCT in developing services for disabled children and those with complex care needs. The work included partnership commissioning arrangements for disabled children together with an Aiming High for Disabled Children Charter, which would formalise current commissioning intentions and enable future funding streams to be robustly monitored and targeted to outcomes for disabled children.

It was noted that the report did not contain the actual Charter agreed by the PCT Board and the Interim Director of the PCT undertook to circulate the final version.

AH/All to
note

The Vice-Chairman stated that the Charter had been signed by all London PCTs. The Chief Executive of Harrow Association of Voluntary Service referred to a discussion at the Children and Young People's Partnership which considered the Charter a very good idea.

The Board welcomed the initiative. It was suggested, and agreed on behalf of the PCT, that the draft action plan include the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

AH/All to
note

AGREED: That the report be noted and the work being undertaken be supported.

All to note

158. Data Quality Policy:

The Service Manager – Performance presented a report on the Data Quality Policy principals and Audit Commission standards for the Partnership. It was noted that the External Auditors were currently looking at how the Council used data and how it was shared with Partners. The Audit Commission had developed standards with regard to partnerships which were listed in the report and comments were sought from the Board.

A Voluntary and Community Sector Representative highlighted the difficulty in obtaining consistent statistics for monitoring information by the voluntary sector which was often disproportionate to the sum of money in question. The Service Manager – Performance agreed that overly complex systems were not necessary and offered support to work with the sector.

The Chairman drew attention to the statement that the need for accuracy should be balanced against the use, cost and effort of collection. Where compromises had to be made on accuracy, the resulting limitations of the data should be clear to its users.

In response to a question as to what was required of the Council's Partners, the Board was informed of the standards the Audit Commission would expect the Partnership to have agreed as a framework and standards. Large organisations would have an equivalent framework whilst a data quality template for use by smaller organisations would be useful.

The Vice-Chairman referred to the discussion on a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment at a previous meeting of the Board which included kite marking quality, the need to be aware of how current and robust data was, and that the officers were progressing a timetable to deliver the JSNA.

The Chief Executive of Harrow Council informed the Board of the proposal for a Joint Intelligence Unit, the first stage of which was to bring together all the information held by the Council on Harrow. The second stage would be to combine this with information held by Partners, such as the PCT and Police to provide an improved assessment of issues in Harrow. It had been agreed in principle to undertake an exercise in co-locating a

combined unit. Progress would be reported back to the Board.

All to note

AGREED: That the Data Quality Policy principals and Audit Commission standards for the Partnership be adopted.

159. CAA and the Area Assessment:

The Board received a report detailing the risk management approach to the new Comprehensive Area Assessment. It was noted that the methodology had been made available the week prior to the meeting and was required to be in place by 1 April 2009. The report focused on the three questions – priorities expressing local need, how well it was delivered and prospects for future improvement.

The Chairman stated that the item had been the subject of discussion at a recent LGA conference. It encouraged Partners to work together as any failure would affect the other Partners. Any comments on the report should be conveyed to the Senior Policy Officer.

All to note

Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Labour Group, Harrow Council) referred to the suggestion that a partnership manager co-ordinate and update the risk register and recommended that the officer also input a resource to ensure that the groups delivered.

In response to a question, it was noted that definitions had been established to reflect the themes of the original Local Area Agreements although additional definitions could be required over time.

The Chairman referred to the Large Employers' Network and raised the possibility of it linking into the HSP and forming a Management Group as it was an important part of the Partnership remit. If appropriate he would raise it at a future meeting.

DA/All to
note

AGREED: That (1) the recommended approach for the area assessment to the Comprehensive Area Assessment be noted;

(2) the Board agree to nominate a partnership manager from each management group to be responsible for co-ordinating and updating the risk registers.

160. Compact Investigation Report:

The Board received a Compact Investigation Report relating to decisions of the Harrow Council's Grants Advisory Panel taken at a meeting held on 5 March 2008.

It was reported that a satisfactory conclusion had been reached subsequent to the efforts and contribution from a wide range of people and the process had given credence to the Compact.

Mike Coker, a Voluntary and Community Sector Representative and Advisor to the Grants Advisory Panel outlined his concerns that had resulted in the Compact Investigation.

In view of a satisfactory conclusion being reached it was decided inappropriate to refer it to the Council for consideration but to refer it to the

Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.

AGREED: That the Compact Investigation Report and outcome be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.

MH/All to
note

161. Scrutiny Review - Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector - Interim Report:

The Chief Executive of Harrow Association of Voluntary Service introduced an interim report of the Scrutiny Review on delivering a strengthened voluntary and community sector. The final report was expected to be available in December.

She stated that some really good work had taken place and the voluntary and community sector were pleased to have been involved as equal partners.

The Chairman responded that the Council considered the review to be a high priority.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

All to note

162. Delivery of the New Local Area Agreement:

The Board received a report updating it on the processes that were being put in place to communicate and monitor the delivery of the recently agreed Local Area Agreement.

Partners were requested to look at the delivery plans, identify any gaps and inform the Senior Policy Officer by 3 September if there was anything further that their group was contributing. Organisations were requested to publicise the new LAA and delivery plans by adding a link to their website, circulating press releases and distributing a letter to everyone who had been involved in the process.

All note note

The officers were requested to maintain a consistent format for the plans and to have a one page bullet summary of the process to enable it to be discussed more widely.

TT/MH

A Voluntary and Community Sector Representative suggested that National Indicator 7 (Improve the environment to enable a thriving third sector) be reassigned to the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum whilst retaining the Lead Officer.

AGREED: That an updated report be submitted to the next meeting.

TT/All to
note

163. Local Area Agreement - Action Plans:

The Board reviewed the action plans prepared by the Community Cohesion Management Group and the Safer Harrow Management Group in order to address and rectify the poor performance of the volunteering stretch indicator and the non residential burglary indicator.

It was noted that although the Quality of Life Survey had resulted in a green score it remained in the action plan to ensure the position was maintained. A Voluntary and Community Sector Representative suggested

that the action plan for volunteering should be more extensive, particularly given that the Scrutiny report contained eight or nine proposals.

In response to a question as to why only two areas were detailed, it was noted that the two areas chosen were considered capable of improvement whereas it had already been decided that an improvement in the reduction of fixed term exclusions was unattainable. Improvement in attendance at the 25% worst performing schools was not considered possible.

With regard to the proportion of adults who said that people from different backgrounds got on well in their neighbourhood, the action plan referred to a small group and funding of £40k had been identified for a programme of work in four wards with an additional £10k publicity.

The Police were confident that the figures for non residential burglary would return to previous levels.

AGREED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) an updated action plan for volunteering be submitted.

MH/All to
note

164. Update on Harrow's Voluntary and Community Sector Consortium:

A report was received to update the Board on the progress of the Harrow Voluntary and Community Sector Consortium and to highlight members' concerns to the HSP.

The HVCSC had taken its concern regarding the issues around the awarding of the contract for Links to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Leader of the Council and Corporate Director of Finance had undertaken to speak to the Forum. The voluntary sector required commission training and would like to work with the HSP.

The Chairman referred to a LGA conference on commissioning the third sector which included training programmes and asked the Service Manager, Policy and Partnership Service to make the documentation available.

AGREED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) details of the training documentation from the LGA conference be made available.

MH/All to
note

165. Proposed LAA Performance Reward Grant 2008 - 2011:

An update on the Government's proposed performance reward grant mechanism for the new Local Area Agreement, which was currently out for consultation, was received by the Board. It was noted that it was based on overall average performance and not against local indicators or statutory children's indicators

In response to questions, it was noted that it was not possible to get more than 100% so if the target was exceeded there was no further reward. It was suggested that the threshold should be 50% with a full grant at 90%.

It was further noted that the amounts involved were too small to be an

incentive. Most of the delivery was for the Police, Council and PCT. Should there be a third round the £2.2m could serve as pump priming for a third round.

AGREED: That the report be noted and the comments raised be conveyed to the Government.

MH/All to
note

166. Partnership Governance:

The Board considered proposals for restructuring the Partnership contained in a Governance Handbook which set out the formal interaction between the proposed new Partnership bodies. A paper was circulated detailing a reduced membership of the Partnership Assembly of 29.

It was noted that the proposals arose from the forthcoming introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment; the outcomes of the IDeA Peer Review undertaken the previous year which identified duplication within the present structures and limited reach of the existing Partnership; and partners' own conclusions that more could be achieved with a streamlined organisation.

The Service Manager, Policy and Partnership Service, referred to the proposal at the previous meeting to implement a structure of a larger assembly and smaller executive. The key features of the proposed structure were a summit held twice a year, wider representation with an assembly with a suggested membership of 29, and a Board of five.

Discussion arose on the size of the Assembly. The originally proposed membership of 46 was considered to be dysfunctional for a body to provide strategic direction. Membership should be based on those who could contribute to the Assembly and add value. Some partners would be better engaged on Management Groups such as Head Teachers on the Children and Young Peoples Group. The Chief Executive would advise the Assembly but would not be a member. Whilst young people could be invited to meetings they could be more interested in Partnership Boards. In addition to the Chairman of the Older Persons Reference Group, the Chairman of the Voluntary Sector Reference Group should be on the Assembly. The idea of a summit meeting twice a year was welcomed particularly for accountability and visibility.

Members of the Board were invited to write in with comments. The Service Manager, Policy and Partnership Service was requested to liaise with those who were not in attendance at the meeting in order to ensure feedback from every Group.

AGREED: That consultation take place and a further report be submitted.

MH/All to
note

167. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting was scheduled for 22 October 2008.

[Note: The Meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.23 pm]