



**Blackburn with Darwen Strategic Partnership Board
Minutes of a Meeting held on Monday, 16th November 2009**

PRESENT:

Mike Murray (Chair)
Cllr Michael Lee
Cllr Kate Hollern
Cllr Chris Thayne
Cllr David Foster
Amanda Meachin
Peter Hobkirk
John Slee
Kevin Ruth
Elizabeth Taylor
Peter Neill
Nick Kennedy
Ian Clinton
Dominic Harrison
Andy Taylor
Judith Griffin
Tom Phillips
Andy Rhodes
John Jordan
Julie Crawford
Garth Hodgkinson
Laurence Loft
Yvonne Hulse
Vidusi
Cllr Salim Mulla
Amar Abass
Serge Bouna Buku
Ian Gallagher
Mohammed Ilyas Patel
Graham Burgess

OFFICERS

Sayyed Osman
Tom Stannard
Steve Szostak (Head of Economic Development)
Ros Davies (Principal Partnerships Advisor)

Philippa Cross (Performance Manager)
Sarah Drea (Democratic Services)

Apologies for absence - Councillor Colin Rigby, Cllr Michael Law-Riding, Mike Damms, Tom Finn, Adam Scott, Pauline Walsh and David Gavagan.

1 WELCOME AND MINUTES OF THE LAST LSP BOARD MEETING ON 14TH SEPTEMBER 2009

Mike Murray welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked members to introduce themselves.

AGREED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September 2009 be approved as a correct record.

2 MINUTES OF THE LSP EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON 26TH OCTOBER 2009

AGREED – That the minutes of the LSP Executive meeting held on 26th October 2009 be noted.

3 COMPACT WITH THE THIRD SECTOR

The Board considered a report by the Director of Policy and Communications concerning the Compact with the third sector.

It was emphasised at the meeting that each commissioning organisation needed to take the report to their decision making body for approval.

Within the context of the Compact, the Chair advised the Board that he had received a complaint from a member of the public about the adequacy of the Council's consultation with Community Associations prior to an Executive Board decision in June 2009 to note “that, following a review of funding arrangements for the Community Assets service, the payment of grant to Community Associations currently linked to community centre income will be ended after payments for the year 2008-9 have been reviewed and processed.” Having investigated the complaint and interviewing the appropriate senior Council officers, the Chair had concluded that while a range of consultations had taken place as part of the Royds Review in 2007, they did not totally fulfil the requirements of the Compact which was approved in 2008. In the circumstances, he concluded that the Council had not consulted as widely as it should have, a decision which Cllr Lee accepted and apologised for on behalf of the Council.

The Chair had spoken to the complainant to discuss his findings and the complainant was satisfied with them. He indicated that in making his complaint, he accepted that the outcome may have been the same had full consultation taken place, but it was not the decision so much as that due process had not been followed that had been his real concern.

Cllr Lee informed the Board that the same issue had been raised with the Council and that the funding of community associations was being considered as part of the review of Neighbourhood Boards. It was reported that a letter had been sent to each of the community associations to invite them to attend a focus group as part of that review. When that review was concluded, its findings and recommendations would be brought to a future meeting.

The LSP was satisfied with the Chair's explanation and findings and with the position outlined by Cllr Lee. Members accepted that going forward, it would be important for LSP commissioners to learn from this case and be more aware of the Compact's provisions, particularly as regards consultation.

AGREED

1. the report was approved and progress in implementing the Compact with the third sector was noted;
2. support was affirmed for three year funding under Service Level Agreements in appropriate cases on the basis set out in the report;
3. support was given to the LSP's Compact Sub Group's position that in the current uncertain financial climate, when 3 year Service Level Agreements are put in place, individual services should consider specifying that the level of funding will be determined on an annual basis following the same level of up / down rating as is applied to the commissioning budget to minimise the risks of inadequate budgetary provision in the second and third year of the Agreements, subject to the caveat listed in 4 below;
4. it was acknowledged that any reduction in funding arising from 3 above would need to be accompanied by a re-negotiation of the targets and outputs within the Agreement, and it was noted that this could give rise to cases where service provision could become untenable so the annual break points in 3 year agreements might need to be invoked to allow withdrawal if necessary;
5. the Borough's excellent performance against the national indicator on the environment for a thriving third sector was noted;
6. it was noted that the Compact's provisions will be mainstreamed into the Council's operation through the business planning process in future years;

7. the proposal within the report was endorsed that the Compact Working Group should be brought to an end, given that the Compact Sub Group has been the group which has progressed (and is continuing to progress) the implementation of the Compact, and bearing in mind that there is a considerable overlap of membership between the two groups;
8. the proposals within the report were endorsed;
9. Each commissioning member organisation of the Local Strategic Partnership needed to take this report to their decision making body for approval; and
10. Other member organisations would consider whether they would wish to share the report with their decision making body.

4 DISCUSSION WITH THE CHAIRS OF ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND HEALTH AND WELL BEING PARTNERSHIPS ON THOSE THEMATIC FORUMS 'BIG TICKET ISSUES'

The Chair gave an update to the Board on the current initiatives within the Economic Regeneration Partnership including the links between higher education and better jobs. The Board discussed the issues around inward investment and improved facilities at the College allied to the skills requirements in the area which could be linked to specific research projects and specialisms that Blackburn and Darwen could focus on. The Board discussed what theme the specialism could be and potential work to look at partnerships between higher education and local industry. Members asked if enough evidence already exists to show what we should be preparing for, and if information should be commissioned. Ian Clinton informed the Board that the College has commissioned a research project through PLACE which should look at these issues and well into the future.

Members were of the opinion that whilst current work was having a beneficial effect, headline activities would be needed to make a big difference which could be for the wider Pennine Lancashire area. That discussion could be held with other regional LSP's. Graham Burgess outlined a number of recent projects and issues and suggested that each issue be reported on and challenged at future meetings.

The Board moved on to discuss raising the aspirations of local residents with the aid of education and that this needed to be planned along with housing and employment.

Steve Szostak, Head of Economic Development, informed the Board that the LSP's regeneration board will be steering the new economic strategy for the borough and that most of the ingredients from this discussion will

be finding their way into the new strategy. He explained that it was not just about economic development but also about cumulative economic regeneration and there was a need to ensure that the big ticket issue was interrelated to other issues, so that not only would the item be transformational, but also the method used. For example a community based economic regeneration would be more economically successful than other projects in some areas.

Members asked that focus still needs to be placed on those areas that are deprived, especially with regard to housing. The Chair reported that in the past when postcode surveys have been carried out they have confirmed that funding is going to deprived areas and that improvements in the quality of local jobs can invoke improvements in the housing market. Graham Burgess explained that with regard to the deprivation performance indicators, more emphasis was now placed on housing and health which had explained Blackburn with Darwen's move in the league tables. He commented that with new members of the LSP, it may be useful to have a presentation from Tom Stannard regarding the deprivation issues.

5 BLACKBURN COLLEGE UNIVERSITY CENTRE

Ian Clinton, Principal, gave a verbal presentation on the new Blackburn College University Centre. He informed the Board that there were now over 4,000 students enrolled, and that 15 new academic staff had started, the majority of whom had not worked in the public sector before. Ian explained that the Higher Education Centre is funded direct from the Higher Education Council as other universities, but was unable to bid for research funding in the same way as other universities, therefore Blackburn was developing links with bigger universities and the private sector. The university centre aimed to specialise in specifics and maintain vocational relevance and cutting edge knowledge.

Graham Burgess added that BwDBC worked closely with the College, especially with regard to the future, and that the ambition was for a significant expansion in places in Burnley and Blackburn in the next 4 years. He explained that the aim was to build the education capacity within the knowledge zone to link into local industries such as aerospace.

The Board discussed other areas that the College might specialise in.

AGREED – That the update be noted.

6 SIX MONTH REVIEW OF THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Philippa Cross, Performance Manager, gave a verbal presentation on the Local Area Agreement (LAA). She reminded Board members that the LAA was signed off in June 2008 and refreshed in March 2009, and that

it contained 30 designated three year targets to bring about significant improvements in the borough. She informed the Board that the data was now available for a majority of year 1 targets, 71% of year 1 targets had been met or exceeded and 81% of year 2 targets are on or slightly off track at the year 2 six-month stage. She explained that target data was still not available for some key indicators and that the economic targets were to be reviewed with the GONW in January 2010.

Philippa outlined the key achievements of the LAA under the headings of economy, health, stronger, safer and education, but she explained that it would be the achievement of next years targets that mattered and explained that there were concerns regarding premature deaths from circulatory diseases, people quitting smoking, numbers of young people being screened for Chlamydia and narrowing the achievements gap for children in our care which may require a greater focus of efforts from the LSP. Philippa recommended that the chairs of those thematic groups look at how these targets can be addressed.

AGREED – That the presentation be noted and that reports be presented to the next meeting in January with more detail regarding the steps to be taken for each issue.

7 FOCUS OF THE BOARD'S DEVELOPMENT SESSION ON 11TH JANUARY 2010 (THE 2030 VISION)

The Chair informed the Board that the focus of the Board Development Session on 11th January 2010 would be the Big Ticket items and the 4 targets which have not improved. The Board discussed the Big Ticket topics, including utilising the ageing population and agreed that a big imagery and radical approach was needed, especially with regard to individual agencies providing services. Board members questioned if there was a need to know what other LSP's in the area were doing and Graham Burgess offered the services and venue of the Council if a meeting was to be arranged. This would be considered further at the Board's forthcoming Development Session.

8 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting of the LSP Board will be its Development Session on 11 January 2010 at 1pm and the next meeting of the LSP Executive will be held on 15 February 2010 at 5.30pm.