Bucks County Council

Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Review of Social Care Partnership

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4. The framework should be understood and implemented consistently at all levels of the authority.

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5. Social Services are asked to review their criteria for establishing Service Level Agreements.
6. Agreements that set out the level of service and provide stability of funding over a period greater than one year are to be encouraged.
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7. Council Officers should be encouraged to develop a range of non-financial support for voluntary groups.

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8. Good communications are a two way process and both parties should work towards improvement.
9. A dedicated telephone number should be established to ensure that there is quick access to information from the County Council.
10. Wherever possible the Council should identify named contacts and ensure that details are kept up to date.
11. All mediums of communications should be used including the Council's web site, which should include a special section with information and help for voluntary organisations.

Working Together

12. The County Council should bring together the information that they hold about voluntary organisations into one list to provide a clear picture of the County Council's involvement.
13. A mapping exercise should be undertaken to establish which organisations are jointly funded by statutory bodies in Buckinghamshire.

Funding

15. The Council should work to achieve co-operation and consistency across the funding agencies.
16. The funding process should ensure fair access and be well publicised.
17. The funding criteria should be clear, transparent and consistent.
18. The funding criteria should recognise that infrastructure support can make an important contribution to building capacity.
19. The application process should be clear and easy to follow.

Monitoring

20. Monitoring should be proportionate to the level of support provided.
21. The Council should co-operate with other funding agencies to reduce unnecessary monitoring and ensure that no duplication is taking place.
22. The principle aim of monitoring should be to test the outcome and quality of service provided.
23. The monitoring process and method used should be subject to agreement between the parties.

Member Involvement

24. A designated Cabinet member/s should be responsible for partnerships with the Voluntary Sector.
25. The Cabinet member should oversee service level agreements promote the development of partnerships and ensure that the County Council is fulfilling it's responsibilities set out in the Compact.
26. The Cabinet member should be assisted by a panel of members to help maintain contact with voluntary sector partners.
27. Members should be advised about voluntary groups operating in their area and assisted to make contacts in line with their community leadership role.

Developing a Compact

28. Social Services should take a proactive part in the development of a Compact for Buckinghamshire.

  - It will need to include:
    - *A clear statement of why the two sectors should work together and the expectations;*
    - *A declaration of mutual support;*
    - *Promote partnership that lead to the parties achieving more together than they would separately.*

District Councils

29. Steps should be taken to develop closer working arrangements with District Councils in the area of social care partnerships.

Training

30. Social Services should encourage more joint training opportunities.

2. Introduction

i. At their September meeting the Committee agreed to undertake a study of Buckinghamshire County Council's Social Care Partnerships. The Committee were mindful that Partnerships play an increasingly important role in the delivery of social care services in Buckinghamshire. The contribution that partners play is widely appreciated by officers and members. But the unanswered question is whether partnerships in Buckinghamshire are working in such a way that provides maximum benefit.

ii. Over £11m is spent in the 'not for profit' sector by Social Services. This amounts to approximately 15% of the social care budget. It is estimated that more than £2m is spent with the Voluntary Sector. Substantially more is spent in purchasing services from the Independent Sector but we have not examined this in depth. Our study has concentrated mainly on partnerships with the Voluntary Sector. Social service officers say these partnerships have evolved over the years, not always in a planned way. We question how robust these partnerships are, do they lead to joined up thinking, co-ordinated planning, and action to provide improved service delivery?

iii. Successive Governments have pressed local authorities to transfer a range of social care services to the voluntary and independent sector. The Community Care Act required statutory agencies to consult with the voluntary, community and user organisations in the planning and implementation of services, this was made a condition of the special transitional grant.

iv. The present Government has reinforced this message by making clear the importance of forging partnerships with the voluntary sector. They say:

"Voluntary organisations make an enormous contribution to social care working alongside and in co-operation with social services. Social services should have good relationships with the voluntary organisations both in service provision partnerships and also in order to help understand the needs of users. Local councils should ensure that they know which voluntary organisations are in their area; what the voluntary sector can contribute to meeting the needs of the local population; and where the council's support for the sector can be used to the best effect."

3.   <u>Our Approach to the Review</u>

i.   At their meeting in September the Committee set out its criteria for the review:

    a. To identify the number and types of partnerships;

    b. To obtain information on the types of partnerships, assess what the benefits have been and identify any problems;

    c. To produce an evaluation criteria for measuring the success of partnerships;

    d. To report to the Cabinet;

    e. To put forward recommendations for improvement.

ii.   Names of the participants and methodology for this review are set out in Appendix A.

4.   <u>Buckinghamshire Partnerships</u>

i.   The Committee were provided with a list of 71 social care partnerships that receive financial support. Others, recognised as representing the interests of particular groups of service users, do not receive grants but are from time to time consulted about issues affecting the service.

ii.   The Committee was advised that partnerships generally fall into three categories:

The development of policy;

The development of strategy;

The implementation of strategy (service delivery partnerships)

iii. Initially the Committee were concerned to learn that partnerships were categorised in this way but it was explained that partnerships did not fit neatly into these categories there is a continuum between policy development and service delivery. A single voluntary agency could fit all three categories.

5.   <u>Framework for Partnership</u>

i.   Earlier work on the issue raised the question about whether the needs of the County Council should drive relationships with partners or vice versa. The report went onto suggest that emphasis should be on doing what is good for the County and the people who live in it. A conclusion that few people would disagree with. There are a number of reasons why partnerships should be established and supported.

•   To maximise potential resources for the people of Buckinghamshire by involving partners in undertaking some of the County Council's responsibilities thus releasing resources to undertake other priorities;

- To extend the range of the County Council's activities by working with a wide variety of partners;
- To develop the new duty of well-being by promoting further partnerships;
- To develop services in line with the principles of Best Value.

ii. We asked voluntary organisations how they defined effective partnership. Their replies had a common thread. They talked about shared goals, the importance of good communications, opportunity to influence, greater recognition of their work, collaborative working towards a common aim, and working with common purpose.

iii. The voluntary organisations that we met said that relationships were generally good but were concerned that the County Council appeared to have no strategic direction. Others said that they felt unequal partners. The Council's earlier work, referred to above, was not finalised and there is no clear statement of policy towards the Voluntary Sector.

iv. The SSI Report "Towards a Common Cause" says that there should be an over arching framework with local organisations into which the component parts necessary for partnership can be fitted. The Committee considered that this was good advice and concluded that such a policy would be helpful to the County Council and the Voluntary Sector in Buckinghamshire. It might be seen as a first step towards creating a Compact, which we discuss later in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Council should establish a framework for the future working relationships with the Voluntary Sector.
2. The framework should be applied consistently across service areas.
3. The Chief Officer should lead development work on the framework.
4. The framework should be understood and implemented consistently at all levels of the authority.

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6. Voluntary Sector Infrastructure

i. The all-embracing term Voluntary Sector does not convey a clear picture of the nature of those organisations that join with the County Council in Buckinghamshire to provide services. These organisations range from small community based groups to large national charities. Volunteers administer some and others benefit from professional support. All rely

on the good will and support of a large number of volunteers who form management committees, promote fund raising activities and give support in a variety of other ways. In our conversations with the voluntary bodies general concern was expressed about the difficulty of recruiting volunteers.

ii.   Smaller voluntary groups often have very little administrative support and keeping up with developments and partnership initiatives is difficult for them. They face the continuing problem of having to raise funds, keep up with changes, struggle to recruit and retain volunteers and provide the service for which they were formed. Help and support is therefore vital if the variety and scope of these organisations is to continue. In their planning the County needs to recognise these difficulties and develop close liaison. Voluntary bodies would welcome clearer lines of communications and identified County Staff.

iii.   A number of voluntary organisations are able to use the services of their national bodies, they offer support and guidance and act as an important exchange of information. At local level, Bucks Community Action, The Priory Centre and Chiltern CVS are all affiliated to the National Council for Voluntary Service. Through these local bodies voluntary and community groups are brought together to promote and develop effective local voluntary action. They provide a range of services, information, advice, support and training and can act as a channel through which groups voice their opinions.

iv.   The range and diversity of the Voluntary Sector brings problems too for the County Council. Some of the national organisations have as many as 15 branches in the County. They all have a large measure of autonomy with their own management committees.

v.   In documents presented to us it was argued that voluntary organisations operate very differently from public bodies and that this needs to be understood by those responsible for developing and delivering partnerships. They are independent organisations with constitutions that set out the way in which they are managed and their governance arrangements. Some have charitable status, in this case, the board members are trustees charged with promoting the best interests of the charity. Trustees have a duty to ensure that the organisation pursues its own independent mission. Although the organisations that we spoke to did not raise this as a problem, some have complained that their work has changed because of the changing needs of Social Services.

vi.   We were told that voluntary organisations are being asked to behave in a more businesslike way and to increase their working capacity. To do this they needed the security of core funding backed by political support. They argued that the voluntary sector had to spend a great deal of time looking for funding and preparing bids. This is not a good use of limited resources.

7.   Types of Agreements

i.   The range of partnerships is wide, some make a significant contribution to service delivery within the County. For example the Bucks Association for the Blind provides services on behalf of the Council to blind and partially sighted people. The Red Cross and Age Concern provide day care services and a range of other help. There are several other voluntary bodies that similarly provide extensive services. In order to formalise relationships and make the responsibilities of the parties clear the Council in common with other authorities has developed Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Service Level Agreements sit between contracts that the Council may have with independent service providers and the grants that are provided normally to smaller organisations. SLAs set out the type and level of service that the organisations are expected to provide in return for their funding.

ii.   We asked whether it is proposed to extend Service Level Agreements to all voluntary sector providers. We were told it is not be possible because of limited resources therefore SLAs would be restricted to those who received the largest allocation.

iii. The voluntary organisations that we spoke to generally welcomed the stability that SLAs gave them and also appreciated the clear statement of expectations and responsibility.   Not all shared this view; some who have other arrangements felt that extending SLAs would place extra commitment on them.   The point was made several times in our conversations with voluntary organisations that support is not only about money.   They said that valuable help could be given in other ways. Advice from specialist county officers would be welcome, joint training in a range of subjects including H.R. and I.T., purchasing services, and the use of County telephone centres in Wycombe and Amersham might be considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.   Social Services are asked to review their criteria for establishing Service Level Agreements.

7.   Agreements that set out the level of service and provide stability of funding over a period greater than one year are to be encouraged.

8.   The Council should develop ways in which their expertise and knowledge can be made available to the Voluntary Sector.

9.   Council Officers should be encouraged to develop a range of non-financial support for voluntary groups.

8.   Communications

i.   All the officers that we spoke to said that effective communication was important but we were left not having a clear view about whether they see it to be an integral part of establishing an effective partnership. The diversity of the Voluntary Sector makes communications a complex issue. Small organisations and some of the larger ones said that they experienced difficulties in keeping pace with documentation, directives, briefings and meetings, it took time better spent carrying out their actual work.

ii.   Voluntary organisations welcome regular close contact with identified officers. They generally feel that this is more likely to lead to support and understanding of their problems. Officers that we spoke to agreed that having an identified contact person for liaison purposes could assist good working relationships.

iii. The Bucks Partnership Forum and Locality Forums are seen to be important links in the chain of communication. They clearly provide a means by which Health and Social Services are able to inform representatives of the Voluntary Sector about their plans, and provide an opportunity for their input.   Representatives of the Voluntary Sector play a full part at these meetings and their contributions are taken into account but agendas mainly contain items emanating from statutory agencies. Representation is generally from larger organisations.

iv.   The Equality Fairs organised by Social Services in various parts of the County showing services available from the voluntary and statutory sector, was a good example of work aimed at communicating with the black and minority ethnic community. Consistent efforts should be made to communicate with black and ethnic minority organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9.   Good communications are a two way process and both parties should work towards improvement.

10. A dedicated telephone number should be established to ensure that there is quick access to information from the County Council.

11. Wherever possible the Council should identify named contacts and ensure that details are kept up to date.

12. All mediums of communications should be used including the Council's web site, which should include a special section with information and help for voluntary organisations.

9.   Working Together

i.   The Government's stated objective of working towards a 'partnership' culture implies a more reciprocal and complementary relationship. Officers who spoke to us were supportive of this principle but representatives of the organisations that we spoke to left us feeling that there was not always a spirit of joint ownership. In talking about their difficulties they said, Social Services were slow to implement decisions, changing staff meant that continuity and consistency suffered and there was often a misunderstanding of expectation.

ii.   Against the background of funding and staffing difficulties faced by Council this can be understood, but it is not indicative of a strong partnership.

iii.   In their report "Towards Common Cause" the SSI say that local councils and social services need to know which voluntary organisations are in their area. Social Service officers seemed to have some difficulty in responding to our request for a list of organisations with which we have contact. The SSI say that Social Services should know which voluntary organisations are in their area and what they can contribute towards meeting the needs of the local population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

13. The County Council should bring together the information that they hold about voluntary organisations into one list to provide a clear picture of the County Council's involvement.

14. A mapping exercise should be undertaken to establish which organisations are jointly funded by statutory bodies in Buckinghamshire.

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10. Funding

i. Levels of funding were not part of our terms of reference but predictably everyone that we saw mentioned it. Funding is complex, it can come from one or more of the following sources; Social Services, other County Council departments, District Councils, Trusts and Charities, Special Grants, National Lottery, other National Organisations and local fund raising

ii. We were informed by officers that short life funding of voluntary agencies, for example from the National Lottery, was not linked to social service priorities. There could therefore be some tension if the organisation expected that the Council would automatically take over the funding when the lottery or other grant finished. Voluntary organisations that are funded by more than one agency therefore feel vulnerable. They are concerned that if any one of their funding agents withdraw support that the service they provide could be compromised.

iii. We heard from voluntary organisations that insufficient attention is given to their infrastructure and administrative needs and that this can create difficulties. Funding was an issue for everyone and most of the organisations that we saw said they could do more if funding was available.

iv. Most social service support provides funding for services that might be considered mainstream activities that the Council would traditionally have provided themselves. But there seemed little clarity about how support is determined. We would like to see a clear and transparent process for awarding grants, which is linked to support to the Council's priorities.

v. Our attention was drawn to an example of good practice from South Gloucestershire Council. The Council has agreed to an integrated application process for funding. The Council's priority objectives and funding criteria are set out in an information pack, which includes an application form. All applications for funding were returned to the same Council department. Applications were screened and forwarded to the most appropriate department charged with considering Voluntary Sector funding for that particular task or activity.

vi. Chiltern District Council has a similar arrangement, funding is determined by the appropriate Executive member in consultation with officers and the Executive.

15. The Council should work to achieve co-operation and consistency across the funding agencies.

16. The funding process should ensure fair access and be well publicised.

17. The funding criteria should be clear, transparent and consistent.

18. The funding criteria should recognise that infrastructure support can make an important contribution to building capacity.

19. The application process should be clear and easy to follow.

11. Monitoring

i.   We got a mixed message from voluntary organisations about monitoring. Some thought it to be about right for the amount of money involved others thought it excessive. In one case the organisation had four projects each requiring two reviews a year by different support managers. Another considered that it was onerous and could be less frequent. One organisation said that they found monitoring onerous but said they were pleased that the County were now prepared to accept the monitoring arrangement set out by their national support body. Multi funding brings with it the potential problem of multi monitoring and some organisations clearly experience this difficulty.

ii. Officers of the County said that monitoring needed to be proportionate and take account of how efficient the organisation is. The frequency of monitoring is usually part of any agreed service level agreement. For those without service level agreements the frequency and extent is less clear. We also discussed the issue with the District Councils. They also undertake monitoring but in the case of small grants are often satisfied with annual reports, balance sheets and a member's attendance at the organisations meetings. All thought that there is a case for rationalising monitoring arrangements and agreed that one authority should be prepared to accept another acting on its behalf.

iii. The SSI has recommended that there should be a joint approach to monitoring and evaluation and consultation with other agencies about different approaches. They suggest that quantitative information should be balanced by the views of users and carers about the extent to which their needs have been met.

20. Monitoring should be proportionate to the level of support provided.

21. The Council should co-operate with other funding agencies to reduce unnecessary monitoring and ensure that no duplication is taking place.

22. The principle aim of monitoring should be to test the outcome and quality of service provided.

23. The monitoring process and method used should be subject to agreement between the parties.

12. <u>Members Involvement</u>

i. In Buckinghamshire a number of members represent the Council on the management committees of voluntary bodies. Many play an important and active role but they normally work in isolation from the Council with no chance to inform colleagues about the organisations work. The Committee welcome the form, recently introduced, to facilitate members reports it is not clear however how the information that they contain will be disseminated. There is no forum in which members can discuss the Voluntary Sector and no place for County Council members, other than cabinet members, on the Bucks Partnership Forum and Locality Forum. It may be reasonable to assume therefore that the Council as a collective body is somewhat remote from the work of the Voluntary Sector. There is no guidance given to members who serve on these outside organisations.

ii. Prior to modernisation members served on the Independent and Voluntary Sector Panel this provided a link with voluntary organisations who from time to time made presentations to the Panel about their work. The Panel also considered grants to smaller voluntary bodies and the Social Services Committee ratified these. The terms of reference of this panel were limited but voluntary organisations were pleased to have the opportunity of meeting members and presenting their case.

iii. Voluntary organisations said that they would be pleased to have greater contact with members. County Councillors should play a leading role in the development of policies aimed at strengthening relationships with the Voluntary Sector. In the modernised structure it may be more difficult but seen in the context of the local leadership role ways need to be found to link members with those organisations that carryout such important work in the community.

24. A designated Cabinet member/s should be responsible for partnerships with the Voluntary Sector.

25. The Cabinet member should oversee service level agreements promote the development of partnerships and ensure that the County Council is fulfilling it's responsibilities set out in the Compact.

26. The Cabinet member should be assisted by a panel of members to help maintain contact with voluntary sector partners.

27. Members should be advised about voluntary groups operating in their area and assisted to make contacts in line with their community leadership role.

13.   Compacts are they the way forward?

i.   In November 1998 the Government established a "Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England". It set out the principles for effective working relations. At the same time the Government encouraged local authorities to examine their relationships with the voluntary sector and similarly to establish Compacts.

ii.   The Council Plan makes reference to the need to work in partnership with other agencies but this remains an objective that is pursued in a piece meal fashion and has not been converted into a clear unambiguous statement across the whole authority. About two years ago some detailed work was undertaken by the "Way Forward" group to develop a local Compact across the County Council, District Councils and the Voluntary Sector. This Compact was never agreed and the momentum seems to have been lost.

iii.   The Voluntary Sector would welcome the establishment of a Compact and recently have been working through an organisation called the Bucks Infrastructure Group to promote the idea. The Bucks Infrastructure Group are widely representative of voluntary bodies in the County and have been mandated to lead on the establishment of a Compact for Buckinghamshire, a steering group has been formed and they plan to invite representatives of statutory bodies to join them.

iv.   The Committee invited representatives of the Bucks Infrastructure Group to their November meeting to explain further their views about the establishing a Compact.

v. They said that it was important to have an overall vision and to build on successful services, rather than duplicating. They felt that services needed to be better coordinated in order to make the best use of resources and a Compact was the way in which this could be addressed. They contended that the funding structure is complicated with some services being provided by different portfolios or through District Councils. The Compact would be used to decide who the critical partners were in a relationship and could include funding implications.

vi. Our study shows that Compacts have been successfully introduced and we were provided with a copy of Hampshire County Council document (Attached as Appendix B). The Compact covers many detailed aspects of the relationship between the County and the Voluntary Sector. In the introduction it says "the emphasis is firmly on 'joined up thinking' – coordinated planning and action to deliver local solutions, innovation, continuous improvement and renewed local democracy. The internet provided information about several other Councils that have successfully developed Compacts.

vii. The Government are providing £300m next year via the Active Communications Unit for those authorities that provide evidence to show that successful Compacts have developed into strategic partnerships.

viii. The Voluntary Sector is clearly keen to see the development of a Compact in Buckinghamshire and believe that it will make a significant contribution towards improvement in relationships between voluntary and statutory bodies. The County Council together with other statutory agencies e.g. District Councils and Primary Care Trusts, should support this development. The Compact should set out the procedures and working arrangement between the Council and the Voluntary Sector enabling the parties to declare their support for a set of common objectives and principles.

RECOMMENDATION

28. Social Services should take a proactive part in the development of a Compact for Buckinghamshire.

- It will need to include:
    - A clear statement of why the two sectors should work together and their expectations;
    - A declaration of mutual support;
    - Promote partnership that leads to the parties achieving more together than they would separately.

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14. <u>District Councils</u>

i.   We visited three of the four District Councils in Buckinghamshire and discussed with them their relations with the Voluntary Sector and with Buckinghamshire County Council in the area of social care. There were differences of approach between the District Councils, largely due to the size and geography of the areas that they cover. All had officers with responsibility for partnerships and Executive/Cabinet members with responsibility for this area of the Councils work.

ii.   In the main the Executive/Cabinet in consultation with officers determines their grants. All matched grants to the strategic aims of the Council. In the case of Chiltern and Wycombe they have procedures by which applicants can apply for grants. All three had service level agreements with the larger organisations that they support. We discussed monitoring. They pointed out that they had responsibility to ensure that public funds were being used properly in line with their aims and in a way that benefited the area that they represented.

iii.   We asked whether they have any contact or joint arrangements with the County Council in the area of social care funding. Most contact was through the Bucks Partnership for Action but in the area of social care there was little or no contact. All thought that a greater level of co-operation would be helpful, they responded by suggesting a number of matters that could be considered. They thought it might be helpful to know which organisations are funded by both bodies, it was suggested that a joint application form might be agreed, monitoring by one authority could make the procedure less onerous and generally working together and jointly reviewing areas of activity could be helpful.

RECOMMENDATION

29.   Steps should be taken to develop closer working arrangements with District Councils in the area of social care partnerships.

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15. <u>Training</u>

i.   Representatives of several voluntary organisations said that their members would benefit from more training, although fitting it in with so much else to do would be difficult. They thought that the County Council could be more helpful and that Voluntary Sector members might join courses that were being provided for County Staff. They generally felt that this should be seen as part of the County Council's responsibility to promote effective partnership and they pointed out that they had little or no resources to sponsor training themselves.

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ii.   We think that joint training would help to build mutual understanding and skills and that there would be significant benefits gained from the opportunity to explore each other's roles. The limited resources of the Voluntary Sector should be taken into account and places provided without charge.

RECOMMENDATION

30.   Social Services should encourage more joint training opportunities.

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16.   <u>Conclusion</u>

i.   During our study it became increasing clear that the Voluntary Sector plays a vital part in the provision of services within Buckinghamshire. Much of what they do is integral to the provision of Social Services within the County. The relationship, levels of understanding and trust are generally good but most of those that we spoke to thought that there could be improvements.

ii.   We have concentrated in this report on those areas where we feel that improvement could be made. We have set out a number of initial steps that the Council might take towards this aim. We have particularly looked at social care partnerships, but a number of the steps that we have proposed might equally be applied to other areas of Council activity.

iii.   Throughout our enquiry officers and representatives of voluntary organisations, emphasised the need for mutual understanding and respect for the others role. We have concluded that developing a Buckinghamshire Compact (a framework for the future working relationship of Buckinghamshire County Council and the Voluntary Sector) would make an important contribution.

iv.   We would like to thank all those that have assisted us with this work.

<u>TF/07/03/2002</u>

Participants

The Committee conducted interviews over a series of four meetings they saw, Kate Kennally, BCC Group Manager Service Development and Commissioning (Adults); Jeffrey Orange, BCC; Anita English, Chairman Bucks Infrastructure Group; Cathy Johnston, Chief Executive Buckinghamshire Community Action; Hugh Carey, BCC Cabinet Member for Adult Care; Janice Campbell Service Manager for Adult Care Services; Kim Whitbread Community Care Information Officer and John Beckerleg Strategic Manager for Children's Services.

Members of the Committee also met representatives of the following organisations, Buckinghamshire Association for the Blind, Mencap Buckingham and District, Peoples Voices, Age Concern Buckinghamshire, British Red Cross Society Buckinghamshire, Cross Roads Care South Bucks, Wycombe and Aylesbury District Racial Equality Councils, Buckinghamshire Mencap, Wycombe Women's Aid, Home Start, Aylesbury, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe District Councils, Wycombe and Aylesbury Locality Forums.

Methodology

The Committee focused on the working relations between voluntary bodies and the County Council and also considered relationships with other statutory bodies that are involved in social care partnerships. There was a strong emphasis on getting the views of the Voluntary Sector.

The Committee interviewed social service staff the cabinet member for Adult Care and representatives of the Voluntary Sector. Outside Committee Meetings members also visited voluntary groups.

Members also attended meetings of the Buckinghamshire Partnership Forum, a Seminar organised by the Bucks Infrastructure Group and Locality Forums