



Minutes

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY MEETING

AGENDA ITEM: 2

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 JUNE 2005, COMMENCING AT 2PM AND CONCLUDING AT 4.20PM IN ROOM 100, OLD COUNTY OFFICES, AYLESBURY

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bob Sherwood	BCC Head of Commissioning, Policy & Performance (Chairman)
Belinda Ford	Principal Officer (Policy, Research & Needs) Wycombe District Council
Sheila Franklin	Head of Housing (Needs & Strategy), Aylesbury Vale District Council
Peter Hesketh	BCC Principal Accountant
Martin Holt	Head of Health and Housing, Chiltern District Council
Sean Hughes	Housing Strategy Manager, South Bucks District Council
Anne McLoughlin-Flynn	BCC Partnership Commissioning Manager
Paul Williams	Housing Needs & Partnership Manager, National Probation Service, Thames Valley
Katherine Woolley	Planning Manager, Chiltern and South Bucks Primary Care Trust

IN ATTENDANCE

Kirsteen Murray	BCC Interim Supporting People Manager
Kelly Sutherland	BCC Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

There were no apologies for absence.

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2005, copies of which had been circulated previously, were confirmed.

2 NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMISSIONING BODY, CORE STRATEGY GROUP AND ADVISORY FORUM

Kirsteen Murray, BCC Interim Supporting People Manager introduced a report outlining proposals for new governance arrangements for the Commissioning Body, Core Strategy Group and Advisory Forum. During the Audit Commission inspection the Supporting People (SP) programme in Buckinghamshire had been criticised for not having a separate Commissioning Body (CB) and Core Strategy Group (CSG) and as part of the inspection response, the Commissioning Body had committed to achieving this separation within 3 months.

In addition it was felt that the Inclusive Forum was not used effectively. A lack of service user representation was particularly noted. Therefore the future role of the forum had also been considered as part of this review.

Kirsteen Murray introduced the proposed new governance arrangements. The main points included:

Advisory Forum

- New body to replace the Inclusive Forum – Advisory Forum (AF) was a common term used in other authorities.
- The Advisory Forum would advise the CSG which would in turn inform the CB. A timetable of meetings would be established to ensure that decisions taken by the CB would be informed by consultation with the AF and CSG.
- When a new SP strategy had to be developed, discussion would start at the AF and CSG before consideration by the CB.
- The role of the AF would be to ensure canvassing of clients and stakeholders, to promote the SP programme and to encourage local representation.
- There was no statutory requirement for an AF to be established.

Core Strategy Group

- It was more difficult to define the role of this group. It was suggested that the group should comprise of a maximum of 18 representatives from BCC, each District Council, each PCT, Probation, Youth Offending Service, Drug Action Team, SP Providers, Service User groups and Service Users. It was important to strike a balance between inclusiveness and the practicalities of managing meetings and reaching decisions effectively.
- The SP Accountable Officer would chair the CSG.
- Meetings of CSG would be quorate when seven members were present.

Commissioning Body

- Commissioning Body members would need to be sufficiently senior to be able to make strategic decisions without constantly referring back to their own organisations.
- Meetings of the CB would be quorate when five members were present. Members were asked to consider if decisions should be taken without all partners being present.
- It was suggested that the adoption of a majority voting system should be considered. Currently the CB worked on unanimous voting, therefore there would have to be unanimous agreement from all partners to amend the voting system.
- The Chairman of the CB would be elected annually and any member could be nominated to be Chairman, except the SP Accountable Officer.

Members discussed the practical issues of membership and the proposed Terms of Reference for the three groups. Members generally agreed that the proposed Advisory Forum would have a genuine role and purpose, which the Inclusive Forum had perhaps been lacking. It was also felt that it would be useful for providers to learn about the wider context of the SP programme through the AF. The SP team would play the lead role in organising the AF meetings and it was agreed that it would be a good idea to theme the meetings.

The Commissioning Body AGREED the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Forum.

The issue of who should represent each organisation at the CSG and CB meetings respectively was discussed at length. The Chairman gave examples from a unitary authority where the Director of Social Services, Head of Housing and the Deputy Director of Development from the PCT had attended the CB and Joint Commissioners had attended the CSG.

The revision of the SP governance arrangements was seen as an opportunity to increase engagement with Health. It was reported that in authorities where the CSG's had grown to be very influential they had driven the SP programme forward, whilst also addressing the Health agenda. It was recognised that the SP programme in Buckinghamshire was housing dominated, which was a reflection of the fact that the representatives from the District Council Housing departments had been active members of the Commissioning Body from the beginning. It was therefore difficult for Health representatives to see how SP was relevant to them, when the SP programme could actually present Health with a good opportunity.

The proposal of having one representative from each PCT as a way of widening Health representation might not be the best way forward, but it was agreed that increased representation from Health would be welcomed and it was suggested that Health representatives who might be interested in attending CSG or CB should visit authorities where Health featured more prominently in the SP programme. It was proposed that Terms of Reference should be presented to the Executive Partnership Board, which was seen as the main body for joint working between Health and BCC, in order to prompt further debate on Health's representation. The Terms of Reference would also be presented at CADEX, the meeting of the Chief Executives of BCC and all four District Councils to ensure senior level commitment to the proposed changes.

It was suggested that CSG meetings could be themed to ensure the most appropriate representative attended from each organisation. The frequency of meetings was discussed and it was agreed that meeting four times a year would be a starting point and if further meetings were needed when the next SP strategy had to be devised, then there would be an option to meet more frequently. It was suggested that some standing members would be needed to ensure continuity on the CSG although further members with different areas of expertise could be co-opted onto the CSG for a period of time. Only standing members would be able to vote and voting on the CSG would be on a majority basis (majority being based on those members present at the time, not total number of representatives on the CSG)

The Commissioning Body AGREED the principle of having a more inclusive CSG. Further work needed on the Terms of Reference in light of the above discussion regarding membership.

Members discussed the principle of majority voting on the Commissioning Body and it was AGREED that the current system of unanimous voting should be retained, with unanimous being based on those partners present at the meeting, not the total number of partners of the CB. If papers were circulated in advance, members who could not attend could make their views known if there was a sensitive issue on the agenda. It was hoped that, in the spirit of partnership, those attending the meeting would take into account the views of absentee members.

The Commissioning Body AGREED the Terms of Reference for the CB, subject to further clarification on the issue of membership by Health. **KM**

3 REVISED TIMETABLE FOR 2005/06 MEETINGS OF COMMISSIONING BODY, CORE STRATEGY GROUP AND ADVISORY FORUM

Members considered the proposed timetable for 2005/06 meetings of the CB, CSG and AF. An additional meeting of the CB was requested for August, as there were a number of pressing issues that could not be held over until the scheduled meeting in October. August was a difficult month due to annual leave, therefore it was AGREED that the additional meeting would be held on 5th September at 12noon and this would be attended by the current CB membership.

4 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE MISSION STATEMENT

The Commissioning Body considered a proposed mission statement for Supporting People in Buckinghamshire. It was suggested that SP's preventative role should be highlighted and partnership working should also be mentioned. The Commissioning Body AGREED to the adoption of the mission statement, subject to these amendments. **KM**

5 REVISED SERVICE USER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Commissioning Body received a report on a revised service user complaints procedure. The procedure had been revised to introduce a process which was more closely aligned to the BCC 'Hearing the Customer's View' complaints procedure.

The Commissioning Body AGREED the adoption of the revised procedure.

6 PROVIDER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The SP inspection report suggested that a procedure should be introduced to enable providers to complain if they were not satisfied with any aspect of the SP administration. Providers had been consulted on a draft version of the procedure and the only query raised was with regard to the response time to a letter of complaint. It was felt that a formal response within 21 days was a reasonable response time and the Commissioning Body AGREED the adoption of the Provider Complaints procedure.

Kirsteen Murray reported that the Voluntary Sector Compact was about to be strengthened and would dictate that overhead costs of service providers could not be interrogated. Part of the SP team's responsibilities was to investigate the value for money aspect of services, so a fresh approach would be required to ensure compliance with the compact.

7 ELECTED MEMBER INFORMATION SHARING PROTOCOL

Kirsteen Murray introduced a report on a proposed protocol for sharing information with the local elected member, when the CB were making a decision on reducing or decommissioning services in their electoral division. CB was the decision making body, but this protocol would ensure that the local member was aware of any potentially sensitive commissioning decisions and would have an opportunity to make a representation for the CB to consider.

The Commissioning Body AGREED the adoption of the Elected Member Information Sharing Protocol. It was AGREED that where the SP Accountable Officer had cause to consult with District Council members he would take advice from the District Council representatives on the CB as to the best way to do this.

8 SUPPORTING PEOPLE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Commissioning Body was reminded of the need to revise the eligibility criteria for SP funding prior to the negotiation of new contract terms and the issue of steady-state contracts.

9 ACCREDITATION – FINANCIAL CRITERIA PROTOCOL

The Commissioning Body received and noted a report outlining the financial criteria protocol that will be used by the SP Business Manager to accredit SP providers.

10 PROVIDER APPEAL

The Commissioning Body considered and AGREED to accept a provider appeal.

Concerns were expressed about a possible gap in service provision resulting from the agreed terms of the appeal. It was AGREED that a supply and demand analysis of this service would be presented at the next meeting, with a view to identifying possible short-term solutions. In addition the SP team should work on developing a strategy for Young People. Information from the Strategic Housing Group and the Drug Action Team could inform both these pieces of work.

KM

11 FUNDING APPLICATION (AYLESBURY SINGLE PERSONS SUPPORTED LIVING SCHEME)

The Commissioning Body received a report outlining an application for funding for the Aylesbury Hostel Scheme. In broad terms the Commissioning Body had previously agreed to ringfence funding for this scheme, but confirmation of this decision was now sought by the developing RSL. The Commissioning Body AGREED to continue to ringfence £387,000 per annum for a three year period to fund this scheme.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the progress of the project, the reasons why the project had been delayed and how to progress the project forward. It was now essential to confirm Supporting People client groups, eligibility criteria and a service specification for the hostel and to relate this to the available budget. It was suggested that the CSG should identify support needs, however the CSG was not yet established and this would lead to further delay.

The Chairman recommended that the original working group should be resurrected although the SP team would not be able to be represented, due to current lack of resources. Other members expressed disappointment at the overall lack of progress with the Aylesbury Hostel Scheme and at the fact that the working group would have to reconvene without a representative from the SP team.

12 SUPPORTING PEOPLE TEAM – REVISED 2005/06 BUSINESS PLAN

The Commissioning Body received and noted the revised 2005/06 Business Plan. This had been revised in light of the SP inspection report and much of the work was aimed at addressing deficiencies, which had been highlighted. It was also reported that the SP team were currently concentrating on service reviews, as there was a statutory deadline for completion.

13 SUPPORTING PEOPLE RISK LOG

The Commissioning Body received and noted the Supporting People Risk Log. It was AGREED that this should be a standing item on the CB agenda.

KM/KS**14 SERVICE REVIEWS**

The Commissioning Body received and noted Service Reviews on a number of individual service providers. The Commissioning Body AGREED that in future only reviews which identified potential issues would be presented to the Commissioning Body.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 5 September 2005 at 12 noon in the Conference Room, Hampden Hall, Aylesbury

Chairman