

**MINUTES OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
JOINT IMPROVEMENT BOARD**

**19TH DECEMBER, 2007**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Steve Adams, Mary Baldwin, Peter Cartwright, Bill Chapple (Chairman), Marion Clayton (in place of Cllr Frank Downes) (Buckinghamshire CC), Bill Bendyshe-Brown (Wycombe DC), Michael Edmonds (Vice Chairman) (Aylesbury Vale DC), Roger Reed (South Bucks DC) and Linda Smith (Chiltern DC).

**Apologies:** Councillor Frank Downes (Buckinghamshire CC)

**1. MINUTES**

The following comments regarding the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September, 2007 were made:-

- it was agreed that the Joint Improvement Board (JIB) Chairman and Vice Chairman would agree the draft minutes of all JIB meetings.
- Minute 3 – paragraph 7 – it was commented that it was hoped that cash flow information would be provided to all JIB meetings from February 2008.
- Waste Planning – it was noted that whilst the JIB had discussed whether or not the statutory planning part of waste should be included within the pathfinder remit, no decision had been made on this matter.

The following comments regarding the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September, 2007, were made:-

- (i) Minute 4 (Community Engagement) – paragraph 2, sentence 2 was clarified to read, ‘Members agreed that whilst the work stream would use 19 community/geographical areas, it was important for each partner to remain open to reviewing all current arrangements in order to achieve the best possible outcome for local residents and communities’. Members of the JIB were reminded that the original Pathfinder agreement set out to develop an integrated Community engagement framework based on the 19 identified GC2C areas across the county.

RESOLVED –

That subject to the clarification at (i) above, the minutes of 14th September, 2007, be approved as a correct record.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

### 3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Board received a report on the progress of the Community Engagement work stream. The report included information on progress made against the agreed Project Plan (Appendix 1) which indicated that the project was on target to achieve its key milestones.

Members were advised that following detailed discussions between the County Council, Wycombe District Council, Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue and the Voluntary and Community Sector, the Project Board was now in a position to recommend a community engagement pilot scheme in Wycombe District in 2008.

The pilot, due to commence in April 2008, was for a single streamlined multi-agency community engagement framework for the Public Sector in Buckinghamshire, and would also look to test the new Government duty to involve local people in the budgets, design and delivery of local services. A summary of the proposals was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. The proposals had yet to be formally submitted to the individual Councils and partners for consideration and approval.

It was also mentioned that investigations were being undertaken into running a second pilot scheme in Aylesbury Vale District in 2008 under the Pathfinder model.

Members commented on the following:-

- (i) Streamlining of Community Engagement Groups – that discussions needed to be held with the 16 Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) geographical areas to ensure that community engagement was primarily undertaken at “Level 1”.
- (ii) Consultation with Police on integration of NAGs into framework from 2008/09 (Appendix 1, Task 12) – Members were advised that the Police had agreed that they would work to try and ensure there was only one community engagement meeting held in each geographical area.
- (iii) Report to Leaders and JIB (Appendix 1, Task 43) – Members were informed that consultation with Town/Parish Councils and other stakeholders had been completed. The report had been provided to individual Councils for approval. It was anticipated that this part of the project was on course for a February 2008 launch.

JIB Members asked that a copy of this document be sent to them as soon as it became available (attached).

- (iv) Consultation/dialogue with stakeholders (Appendix 1, Task 11) – Members expressed concerns on the level of decision-making that might be devolved to the Wycombe Partnership, as it comprised non-democratically elected representatives.

- (v) Wycombe Local Area Committee (Appendix 2, Proposal 11) – it was noted that the JIB would have an opportunity to comment on this proposal at the February 2008 meeting.

A detailed discussion was held on the principle of establishing Member Sounding Boards for the Community Engagement work stream, and for other Pathfinder work streams. Members felt that the JIB could fulfil a sounding board role and that members of the JIB were keen to participate in Pathfinder project groups, this however needs to be balanced against the general desire of involvement and communication with as many Councillors as possible across the Pathfinder partners. It was agreed to defer the decision on the creation of any sounding boards to the next JIB meeting in February 2008. In the meantime The Chairman of the JIB, Councillor Chapple, will take the concept of Member sounding boards to the Leaders meeting at the end of January for further discussion. The JIB members were also asked to seek opinions from their respective councils.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the current position reached with the Community Engagement work stream be noted.
- (2) That the Board supported, in principle, the pilot community engagement proposals for 2008 in Wycombe District. The proposals would now be passed to the participating authorities for consideration, with a subsequent report back to the Joint Improvement Board in February 2008.
- (3) That the Board would consider how best to engage with Town/Parish Councils on an on-going basis across the range of Pathfinder activities.

#### **4. PROCUREMENT**

The Board received a report on the Procurement work stream which detailed a summary of progress and key highlights to date, and information on timescales and key milestones. The Procurement Project Board had now met and had agreed its terms of reference in November 2007.

Members were informed that the authorities had agreed to resource internally the data collection and updating work. Part of this would involve spend analysis work with an external company which would be partly funded by the South East Centre of Excellence (SECE). The project would, at this stage, need to retain a contingency to buy in, if required, some specialist external advice, but initial allocation could be reduced from £50,000 to £30,000.

Members commented on the following:-

- (i) the Procurement Project Board was asked to try and agree the prioritisation of 2008/09 procurement activity for Pathfinder authorities in time to report this to the JIB in February 2008.

- (ii) clarification was sought as to whether the “built environment” joint procurement work exercise being undertaken by the County Council should be included as a part of the Pathfinder project. Members were advised that this was a separate procurement exercise which related to the County re-tendering for services such as highways maintenance and design/architecture.

RESOLVED –

That the progress made to date on the Procurement project, including the revised financial requirement, be noted.

## **5. SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Board received a report updating them on the support services project that detailed a summary of progress and key highlights to date, and were informed that data gathering had been completed two weeks late. This would impact on the critical path and meant that the final report would be produced in January rather than at the end of December. Members were also advised that the project was being 100% funded by the South East Centre of Excellence, with work being carried out by Vertex on a fixed price basis. It was not expected that there would be any cost overruns.

A business case for this work stream would be submitted to the Board’s February meeting and would present up to five options to achieve savings. Information on implementation, costings and savings to be made would also be presented to the Board at the same time.

The Board was also provided with an update on communications undertaken to date with Members and Officers. It was expected that a more formal and widespread communications activity would be undertaken after the business case had been produced and clearer direction agreed by the JIB. An offer was extended to hold an informal briefing session for Board Members before the next JIB meeting.

Members commented on the following:-

- (i) clarification was sought as to whether the business case would allow individual Councils to identify the level of savings that each of them could expect to achieve from each of the support service areas being considered. Members were advised that the level of savings to be achieved from each support service area would be identified and that this was dependant on the business model selected, in some of the models it was easy to identify specific savings to partner organisations in other delivery models it would be more of an overall picture of savings for the Pathfinder authorities. However, it was unlikely that authorities would be able to obtain the same levels of savings if they decided to opt out of the process and tried to achieve savings on their own.

Representatives from some of the Councils expressed their concerns that this project would not be identifying the level of savings that individual Councils would expect to achieve from each of the support service areas being considered.

- (ii) in response to a question on whether front line managers had been consulted as a part of data gathering, Members were advised that these managers would not be consulted until such time as the firm proposals were available.
- (iii) there was general agreement that the objectives of this work stream were to both reduce costs and/or improve the performance of the services.
- (iv) clarification was sought and provided on terms within the Gantt Charts and included “BIU”, “Wildcard” and “Story Board”.
- (v) it was confirmed that the professional groups would have the opportunity to put forward an additional option for achieving the desired levels of savings in each support service area.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the progress made to date on the Support Services project be noted.
- (2) That an informal briefing session on the draft business case and implementation plan for the support services project be arranged for JIB Members at the end of January/February 2008.

## **6. CUSTOMER SERVICES**

The Board received a report updating them on the customer services project and was informed that the Project Board was currently evaluating what principles were needed to underpin the partnership vision. The five themes that had been identified so far were Customised/Individual Service Delivery; Common Customer Information; Consistent Service Delivery; Channel Management, and Culture and Change.

Members were also provided with details summarising work undertaken and key highlights to date. The work stream had been able to secure £74,000 plus some free work on benchmarking from the SECE. Two visioning workshops had been held and a final version of the “Vision and Objectives Document” for the business case was currently being considered by the Project Board.

Representatives from some of the Councils expressed their concerns that they were being asked to approve the Vision Statement before they had had an opportunity to read the “Vision and Objectives document”. Of the Members that had seen the document, concerns were expressed that some of the issues mentioned cut across the sovereignty of individual Councils. As such, and for both of these reasons, some Members felt unable to approve the Vision Statement at this time and that this decision be deferred to the February JIB meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the progress made to date with the Customer Services project be noted.

- (2) That a decision on approval of the Vision Statement for the Customer Services Project be deferred until such stage as all Members have had an opportunity to read the “Vision and Objectives document”.

## **7. DEMAND LED TRANSPORT**

This work stream had been split into two areas covering Community Transport and Concessionary fares schemes.

Members received a report updating them on the status of the Demand Led Transport Project covering key issues identified with Dial-a-Ride, and the key opportunities and needs that had been identified. It was noted that a shopping services survey had identified shopping as being the biggest trip generator and that it had been identified that around 30% of journeys were made to access PCT/health facilities such as hospitals, GP surgeries and dentists. There was still further work to do on this part of the project, and further progress would be reported to the JIB in due course.

The Board was also informed that the work on the concessionary fares part of this project had now been completed and the final draft report was with all Councils for approval. The report included option appraisal and recommendations as had been requested in the project brief. Whilst some specific savings might result from the Pathfinder bid, it was difficult to provide an accurate assessment of them at this stage. It was anticipated that the potential differences between operating concessionary fares schemes separately or together would be looked at in 2008, rather than looking at comparisons with the current arrangements. This was due to be fully assessed as part of a later business case when reviewing the options recommended in the report for an administration strategy under a partnership scheme administered by one Council (i.e. Option 3).

Members commented that as 30% of community travel journeys were made to access PCT/health facilities, it was essential that discussions were held with the Health Services to ascertain how funding could be provided to support hospital and healthcare transport.

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the progress made to date on the Community Transport project be noted.
- (2) That it be agreed that the work of the Community Transport project should include considering options to develop a capital funding agreement between the five authorities. In addition, the project should be pursuing, as a matter of urgency, discussions with local PCT/NHS Trusts with a view to seeking funding and other assistance to support hospital and healthcare transport.

- (3) That the Board approved the Partnership Scheme (option 3) as the best administrative strategy option for concessionary fares. (This scheme recommends that one Council provided a first point of contact for users and operators, and for administering claims on behalf of the other Districts, with individual Districts being advised of payments and to either arrange payment based on a monthly agreed payment to the partner/agent or to make the payment to the operator as notified by the managing partner. Details of all such arrangements would be reported to a future Joint Improvement Board).

## **8. WASTE**

The Board received a report updating them on the Waste Pathfinder project that detailed a summary of progress and key highlights to date, and information of timescales and key milestones.

Members were advised that the Waste Project had developed five options for joint working in waste which were in effect possible stages of greater integration/joined up working that could be achieved over time. A Members' Workshop held on 29 November, 2007, had considered the various options and two clear outcomes had been agreed:-

- (i) that realistically there are only two options for greater integration that should be progressed directly to a full detailed business case. These were:-
- an option looking at "getting the most out of what we have got", i.e. a fully developed Bucks Joint Waste Committee.
  - the option of a full Joint Waste Authority.
- (ii) that more time would be allocated over the next 8 months to develop the detailed business case, although the reporting timescale back to the Joint Improvement Board in November 2008 would remain the same.

Concerns were expressed by Wycombe District Council's representative that the outcomes of the 29 November, 2007, workshop should have been considered by the Bucks Joint Waste Committee (JWC) before coming to the JIB. Officers confirmed that this information would be reported to the next JWC meeting. A detailed discussion was held during which it was commented that if the JIB deferred consideration of this matter until after it had been considered by the JWC that the project would lose momentum of 3-4 months.

As previously raised at minute 1, dot point 3, it was mentioned that consideration should be given in the future to the practicality of integrating responsibility for the statutory planning part of waste with the other planning responsibilities delivered by authorities.

**RESOLVED –**

That the progress made to date on the Pathfinder Waste project be noted.

## **9. PATHFINDER PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Board received a report providing an overview of progress to date and future milestones for each of the work streams and projects in the Pathfinder programme. The Chairman asked Members to raise any programme management or other issues in the report that had not already been covered during discussion of the work streams at this meeting.

Members commented on the following:-

- (i) an assurance was sought from Members that they would be involved as early as possible in the initial development of year 2 and 3 programme areas for Pathfinder. It was explained that as there was no additional funding available to support year 2 and 3 projects, Officers were looking to identify innovative projects that might be able to be funded from external sources.
- (ii) it was requested that cash flow information be provided to all future Joint Improvement Board meetings.

RESOLVED –

That the Pathfinder Programme Update December 2007 report be noted.

## **10. COMMUNICATIONS**

A discussion was held on the Bucks Pathfinder Seminar held at the Adams Park Conference Centre, Wycombe on 31 October, 2007.

Members commented that similar events – open to all Members of the pathfinder authorities – should be held six monthly. It would be important to make sure that these future meetings engaged Councillors and were as creative and interesting as possible.

The Board requested that with future agendas, that the pathfinder programme update information be included as appendices to each work stream report.

## **11. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Joint Improvement Board would be held at 5pm on the 28th February, 2008 at the Wycombe District Council.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm