

BUCKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



promoting prosperity, tackling inequalities

Minutes

BUCKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

MINUTES OF THE BUCKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY 17 JUNE 2008, IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM, JUDGES LODGINGS, COMMENCING AT 10.04 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.22 PM.

Members Present

Mr J Booth	Chief Executive, Thames Valley Police Authority
Ms J Brown	Joint Director of Strategy & System Reform, Buckinghamshire Hospitals Trust
Mr A Busby	Chairman of South Bucks LSP/Leader of SBDC
Mr D Ebdon	Chairman, Chiltern LSP
Mr T Egleton	Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority
Ms J Goddard	Economic Development Director, LSC TV
Ms J Hunt	Voluntary Impact
Mr M Hunt	Encompass
Superintendent Ismay	Deputy Basic Command Unit Commander, Buckinghamshire, TVP
Mr C Meakings	Wycombe District Council
Mr A Pratt OBE	Chair, Bucks Economic and Learning Partnership
Mr W Ralls	Area Director, SEEDA
Mr J Savage	Wycombe District Council
Mr C Scroggs	Non Executive Director, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
Mr D Shakespeare OBE	Leader of BCC
Mrs I Thompson	Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils
Mr J Wallis	Non Executive Director, Buckinghamshire PCT
Mr W Whyte	Chair, Aylesbury Vale LSP
Mr C Williams	Chairman of Buckinghamshire Children's Trust

Observers

Mr C Furness, Observer - Chief Executive, SBDC
Mr A Goodrum, Observer - Chief Executive, CDC

Mr A Grant, Observer - Chief Executive, AVDC
Mr E Macalister-Smith, Observer - Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire PCT
Ms E Macdonald, Observer - Bucks Locality Manager, GOSE
Ms J Waldron, Observer - Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Officers

Mrs S Ashmead, Corporate Manager, Policy and Performance
Mrs J Fisk, Policy Officer (Local Area Agreement)
Ms H Wailling, Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Julia Clarke (The Ridgeway Partnership), Lesley Clarke (Wycombe District Council), Stewart George (Buckinghamshire PCT), Janet Godden (OBMH), David Rowlands (Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority), Karen Satterford (Wycombe District Council), Paul Tinnion (Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board), Linda Walton (Business Representative) and John Warder (Chiltern District Council). Members noted that:

John Savage was substituting for Lesley Clarke, Jon Wallis was substituting for Stewart George, Cedric Scroggs was substituting for Janet Godden, Trevor Egleton was substituting for David Rowlands, Charles Meakings was substituting for Karen Satterford and Tony Ismay was substituting for Paul Tinnion. All substitutions were for the duration of the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 BUCKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Chairmanship

David Shakespeare, Leader of Buckinghamshire County Council, was elected as Chairman of the Bucks Strategic Partnership Board for the ensuing year, until further government guidance was issued.

Terms of Reference

Sarah Ashmead, Corporate Manager, Policy and Performance, took members through the draft Terms of Reference. The Board would work at a high strategic level, adding value to the work of other partnerships and providing a strategic overview for the County. The content of agendas for meetings would be informed by partnership issues feeding through, for example, from the thematic partnerships.

Local Area Forums were discussed and it was agreed that a link to these could be added to the Terms of Reference if necessary, once the Locality Strategy had been to County Council. Members agreed the Terms of Reference.

Robin Douglas from the Leadership Centre for Local Government reported back on key issues from discussions held with some members of the board prior to the meeting, and then facilitated a workshop session to look at the format and shape of the Board. During the session the following points were made:

- The Board should be a place of challenge, and not just a forum for receiving reports.
- The Board would be an opportunity to develop partnerships and build on existing relationships.
- Members should ensure that they did not stick to old patterns of behaviour and

thinking. There would also be a need to recognise the complexity and diversity of the membership of the Board.

- Work would need to be kept at an appropriate level, so that it was purposeful, strategic and challenging.
- Meetings should be challenging, but not assertive 'talking shops.'
- Thematic partnerships should be a standing item on the Agenda.
- Meetings could be held with a 'café-style' layout. Two agenda items could be discussed concurrently and then reported back to the full Board.
- Agendas needed to cover a wide range of issues, but not in too much detail.
- There was a need to look at how the Board linked with ground-level work in local areas. A dotted line was needed on the diagram between the thematic partnerships and the LSPs.
- Economy and skills issues differ between north and south Buckinghamshire. There needed to be a mechanism to bring both together. Buckinghamshire is a complex county. However most key decision-makers are on the Board.
- After two meetings the Board would need to review how it was working. A refresh would also be needed after the pilot locality work in High Wycombe.
- The Board should not just be about feeding upwards. It should also take account of organisations which are organised at a countywide level, such as the NHS.
- The Board would need to move quickly to focus on key priorities and to make specific agreements to challenge them.
- There would need to be a balance between content and process.
- The key overall priority is to improve outcomes for residents.

Agenda papers and Minutes

Members agreed that Agenda papers and Minutes should be published on the public website.

4 PREPARING FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

Robin Douglas then told members about the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which would begin in 2009.

The CAA was the new joint inspection framework, and would replace the current Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

Three significant questions which would be asked by the CAA were:

- How well do you understand your area(s)?
- How well are you delivering on the priorities you have set?
- How well are you working together to deliver these?

The CAA would be less-focussed on the details of services or specific organisations themselves, and much more focussed on the outcomes of those services, with an emphasis on partnership working. The CAA was currently being piloted in four authorities, and an additional ten authorities would also be involved in the pilot before the CAA was launched in 2009.

It was not yet clear if other inspection regimes would change following the introduction of the CAA (e.g. the Home Office inspection of Police).

The Audit Commission had promised that the burden of inspections would be lighter with the CAA, and that scores and league tables would be abolished. There would be an emphasis on self-assessment and there would be fewer field assessments, to save money. The stronger an authority was at knowing its area, the less likely it was to have multiple inspections. Satisfaction surveys would become a much bigger budget area for all organisations.

There would be 'naming and shaming' if one part of a partnership was not performing satisfactorily.

A representative from GOSE said that the evaluation of the two-tier pathfinder would also need to be considered.

The LGA had issued a framework which authorities could use to pilot the self-assessment. The intention that was that this would be used in Buckinghamshire at LSP level. The framework would be circulated to all members (attached).

Members discussed the CAA, and identified the following risks:

- Inspections might be very complex
- Inspectorates might not be aligned
- Government may not be focussed on local issues
- Could be over-technical and not sensitive to local needs

Robin Douglas then told the Board about the four parts of the assessment. There were discussions regarding these, and the main issues identified are summarised below.

1. Understanding Local Areas

- There was a large amount of data available.
- Border authorities needed to be considered.
- Local areas were not two-tier, but multi-layer.
- Operationally there is very good joint working, but it could be better at a strategic level.
- People's view of 'place' can be ephemeral and fickle.
- The 6% of residents who answer surveys can affect the 94% who do not.
- A reasonable understanding of area is already there, but still some way to go.
- Personalisation agenda – people will need more choice and a great deal of consultation.
- Place survey will be part of the CAA.

2. Community Leadership and Place-shaping

- Buckinghamshire not bold or brave in terms of collective civic leadership – tendency to blame others. Also a sense of confusion.
- Board can collectively choose to do the unnecessary if it is desirable.
- If an issue can be seen effectively from a local view, there may not be a need to bring it to the Board.
- Serious under-funding – no budget for more aspirational ideas.
- Limited budgets can be a catalyst for joint working.
- How will CAA compare Buckinghamshire with other local authorities who may have more funding? This issue may need to be taken back to central Government.

3. Working in Partnership

- Not always joined-up.
- Varies in perception.
- Political partnership challenge – different to other authorities.

4. Delivering outcomes

- Some issues are difficult to measure (e.g. fear of crime). Challenge to deliver from residents' perspective.
- Inspectors' priorities may be different to priorities of Board or of residents.
- Customer satisfaction surveys important, but imperfect. Mystery shopping might be better.
- Managing customer expectation needs to be improved.
- BSP Implementation Group has rolled out a piece of software which monitors all LAA targets. Exception reports will be brought to BSP Board, as well as a general

overview.

5 THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Chris Williams told members that the 'Story of Place' was a narrative which set out what Buckinghamshire was trying to achieve through the LAA.

There had been extensive consultation with many partner organisations to ensure that the LAA targets reflected the views and priorities of the local community.

The 'Story of Place' and the draft targets had been submitted to the Government. There was an ongoing discussion with the Department for Communities and Local Government as to whether an additional target regarding house completions should be included for the Aylesbury Vale District. The Secretary of State was due to sign off the LAA within the next fortnight.

Jackie Fisk, Policy Officer, said that the indicators had been chosen following discussion with GOSE. Some indicators would be developed further at the first annual review/refresh.

There were a maximum of 35 national indicators, and Buckinghamshire's submission contained 26.

There were also 7 local indicators and 16 statutory education/early years targets.

The owner of each LAA target would co-ordinate a delivery plan overseen by the thematic partnership.

The siting of consultation meetings regarding the LAA south of Aylesbury, and the lack of mention in the 'Story of Place' of rural issues or of landmarks in northern Buckinghamshire were queried. Jackie Fisk commented that the siting of the second consultation event in High Wycombe was in response to feedback from an earlier event regarding space and facilities but agreed that siting of future events would be re-considered. Additions to the narrative could be considered at the refresh. An Equality Impact Assessment would be carried out at the end of July 2008, which would include a 'rural-proofing' exercise.

A member also said that it would be necessary to look at changing demographics, migration issues and the changing environment in Buckinghamshire, and to make projections for the next 25 years. Chris Williams said that at the next meeting a discussion would be held about the process for taking forward the Community Strategy (linked with work carried out by Dr Fosters).

6 FEEDBACK FROM BSP CONFERENCE 'SHAPING BUCKINGHAMSHIRE'

Jackie Fisk, Policy Officer, said that the BSP Conference 'Shaping Buckinghamshire,' had taken a long-term view of future impacts and threats on/to Buckinghamshire.

The Conference had been facilitated by 'Local Futures,' who had looked at the national drivers for change and brought these back to a local level.

Some key issues arising which had been identified were:

Affordable housing

Skills and qualifications

Sustainable economic prosperity

Sustainable communities and community leadership

The Conference had been a starting point for the development of a new Community Strategy. An in-depth report would be produced from the Conference, and this would be made available to the Board.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16 September 2008, 2:30pm – 4:30pm, Main Hall 2, Green Park Conference Centre, Aston Clinton

13 January 2009, 2:30pm – 4:30pm

31 March 2009, 2:30pm – 4:30pm

7 July 2009, 2:30pm – 4:30pm

CHAIRMAN

DRAFT IDEA/LGA SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR CAA

It is clear from the joint inspectorates' proposals for Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) that self assessment has a role to play at the heart of the new performance regime. Work will commence shortly between the Local Government Association (LGA), Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), the inspectorates and councils and their partners in the four CAA trial site areas to test a self assessment tool. This document will provide the basis for that trial activity.

It is also important, however, that self assessment continues to be a valued tool aiding self-improvement outside of the CAA process. To this end, developmental work will also be taking place with a range of councils and their partners outside the CAA trial site areas to ensure the development of a tool suitable for use in a wider context. Again, this document will provide the basis for such activity, with an acknowledgement that, whilst they have a common base as a starting point, the CAA-related tool and the one for use more widely may diverge over the coming months – although it is anticipated they will reflect a significant degree of synergy.

In overall terms, the intention is to establish self assessment as a key performance management tool that aids and enhances the work and delivery of the council and its partners, rather than representing an additional burden, and enhances accountability. It is intended to achieve these ambitions by adopting the following approaches and principles:

- Self assessment will only be required to reflect information, including performance data, that is already in existence – with the use of high quality performance data being fundamental in achieving the tool's objectives
- This self assessment tool will be developed in a way aimed to dispense with as many requirements for other self assessment documents as possible
- Self assessment should look both forwards and backwards:
 - Forwards at the changing needs, expectations and aspirations of citizens, planned actions, opportunities and risks
 - Backwards at performance, what has/has not been delivered and the resulting impact on local citizens
- Self assessment should recognise achievement as much as it does areas for improvement
- The self assessment should be commissioned and signed off by the local strategic partnership
- The tool should outline the collective performance of the council and its partners in delivering key local, regional and national priorities and focus in the main on outcomes, looking at the 'what' rather than the 'how' of achievement
- The self assessment should identify areas of concern that may benefit from more detailed examination, for example through an in-depth scrutiny exercise,

and inform improvement planning - ultimately leading to improved performance

- The tool should aid learning and common understanding between partners – its effectiveness will depend on the extent to which there is openness, honesty and trust between partners
- Self assessment should be internally and externally challenged through, for example, involvement of staff at different levels, local people, overview and scrutiny and peer challenge
- There should be public reporting of the findings to citizens and service users in a meaningful and accessible way

SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

A guidance note for the undertaking of self assessment will be developed in due course but at this stage the focus is on the areas that self assessment will cover. Essentially the self assessment will cover four main areas:

Understanding the local area and its communities

Community leadership and place-shaping

Working together to improve the local area and make life better for people

Evaluating progress and identifying areas for improvement

Outlined below are the key elements that together constitute these areas and which it is proposed form the basis of the self assessment's narrative, with the council and its partners providing a jointly agreed overview of their position in relation to each element:

UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL AREA AND ITS COMMUNITIES

Understanding local needs

Assess the extent to which:

- There are arrangements for community engagement which provide an accurate understanding of the diverse needs and interests of all sections of the community, including those at risk of disadvantage or social exclusion
- The council and its partners actively seek to build the capacity of local communities to enable their engagement
- The input of local people genuinely informs and influences decision-making
- Local intelligence is gathered and shared in a co-ordinated way by the council and its partners

- Local intelligence is robust enough to provide a solid base for future plans and accurately identify opportunities, risks and threats for the future well-being of the community

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PLACE SHAPING

Community leadership, community involvement and political choice

Assess the extent to which:

- There is an ambitious and shared long term vision for the area which reflects the diverse needs and interests of the community
- There are clear and jointly agreed short and medium term priorities for the area
- Local citizens, including those at risk of disadvantage or exclusion, elected members and other stakeholders are able to contribute to the priority-setting process in a meaningful way
- It is clear how and why the identified priorities have been decided upon, how the views of different stakeholders have been taken into account and how competing interests have been resolved
- The Local Area Agreement targets contribute to the fulfilment of the vision and priorities for the area
- The sustainable community strategy and other local and regional plans have regard to one another
- All councillors play an active role in their communities, acting as a key channel of communication, facilitating dialogue and participation and ensuring the views of local people are heard in the decision-making process
- Decision-making structures and processes are transparent and contain effective checks and balances
- The council and its partners take difficult decisions for the greater or longer term good of the community whenever it is necessary and stand up to external pressures which go against the interests of local people
- Difficult decisions, once taken, are stuck to unless the case for revision is compelling
- Local people are kept well informed of key issues, with communication being co-ordinated between partners wherever this is beneficial
- The council and its partners effectively manage the area's reputation and those of their organisations
- The council and its partners, in seeking to meet the needs and interests of local people, endeavour to influence thinking and activities sub-regionally, regionally, nationally and potentially even globally

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE LOCAL AREA AND MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR PEOPLE

Working together as partners

Assess the extent to which:

- The council and its partners are recognised as working effectively together to address the needs and advance the interests of the local community
- The vision and priorities for the area are translated into operational plans by the council and its partners
- The culture is such that partners are able to hold each other to account and differences and difficulties can be overcome, with this being underpinned by formal governance arrangements
- Partners respect the constraints and demands placed on one another as a consequence of their different responsibilities and accountabilities
- The council's scrutiny function is able to call on local public service providers for evidence and to respond to the authority
- Partnerships that duplicate each other or are not seen to be adding value are rationalised
- Services are delivered by a variety of agencies, including public, private and voluntary sectors
- Local people are encouraged and enabled to play an active role in their communities and to take action to improve their area and quality of life

Managing performance

Assess the extent to which:

- Tangible outcomes for communities, reflecting the identified priorities of the area, represent the key success measures
- The council and its partners reflect the importance they attach to meeting community needs by setting themselves stretching targets and timescales for delivery
- There is a robust performance management framework which enables partners to monitor progress in the delivery of the priorities for the local area
- Performance management activity leads to improved outcomes reflecting the area's priorities
- Information on performance in delivering the priorities for the local area is easily accessible by the public
- Action is taken to address under-performance

- The authority and its partners are moving towards a real-time performance monitoring system that is common between them
- There is a shared commitment between the council and its partners to data quality

Use of resources

Assess the extent to which:

- The resources of the council and its partners are aligned with the agreed priorities of the area
- The council and its partners maximise the benefit secured from their resources and ensure value for money
- There are collaborative approaches between partners wherever working together will provide greater value than organisations working separately
- The opportunities for shared services and joint procurement are maximised by the council and its partners
- Practices and policies relating to the use of resources have regard to issues of sustainability
- The council and its partners are developing markets and building the capacity of local organisations to capitalise on the resulting opportunities wherever appropriate
- The organisational policies, practices and cultures of the council and its partners support high quality performance, good people management and joined-up working
- The council and its partners' HR practices and change activities are subject to rigorous equality impact assessment
- Within the council, there are constructive working relationships between elected members and officers and clearly defined respective roles and responsibilities

EVALUATING PROGRESS AND IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Delivering outcomes

Assess the extent to which:

- The council and its partners are successfully delivering the priorities for the local area
- Life is improving for local citizens
- The council and its partners are reducing inequalities and discriminatory outcomes for all members of the community

Risk to delivering agreed priorities

Assess the extent to which:

- Risks to fulfilling the priorities and vision for the local area are identified, understood and managed effectively
- Barriers to the achievement of the agreed priorities and/or improvement in organisational functioning and delivery are understood and being addressed