

Thriving Communities Corporate Priorities Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2006

Chief Regeneration Officer's Office, 4th Floor, Merrion House

Chair	Neil Evans (NE), (Chair) Neighbourhoods and Housing
Present	Steve Carey (SC), Corporate Services – for Items 1-3 Martin Green (MG), Neighbourhoods and Housing Dennis Holmes (DH), Social Services Tom Knowland (TK), Development Val Snowden (VS), Learning and Leisure
Minutes	David Kidston (DK), Neighbourhoods and Housing

Action

1.0 Apologies.

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Rory Barke (RB), Julie Meakin (JM), Rehana Minhas (RM), Denise Preston (DP), Marilyn Summers (MS), Lelir Yeung (LY). Martin Green attended on behalf of Sue Wynne (SW) and Tom Knowland attended on behalf of Steve Speak (SS)

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1 NE reported that, despite concern over the accuracy of performance data on housing decency, the auditors have not qualified the indicator for housing decency.

3.0 Tackling worklessness

- 3.1 MG presented a report on worklessness, which outlined: the nature of the problem of worklessness; key changes to national policy and local delivery; progress against key targets; and ways to improve strategic and operational responses to the problem.

- 3.2 There was a detailed discussion of the key issues around worklessness, including the following:

- City-wide Narrowing the Gap targets on worklessness need to be revisited as part of the current review of the Leeds Regeneration Plan (LRP). Existing targets are focussed on changes at ward level, whereas the focus should be on achieving improvements in individual SOAs within priority neighbourhoods.
- There is a need to establish a more diverse provider base to address the issue of worklessness in the City. The lack of a strategic coordinating partnership group at the City level currently limits the ability of the City to direct resources to priority groups

Action

and neighbourhoods.

- The Welfare Reform Green Paper clearly emphasises the role of local areas/cities in developing local solutions to worklessness. However it is not currently clear how Job Centre Plus will facilitate this and engage with cities, because it has a sub-regional structure and its targets are set nationally. There is a need to clarify what the Green Paper means by 'cities', as developing city-regional solutions to worklessness might be more compatible with the structure of Job Centre Plus.
- Provision needs to address initial barriers to employment, such as mental health issues, drug dependency, motivation and a culture of worklessness in some neighbourhoods, before workless residents can be upskilled.
- As a result of the new legislation, a greater proportion of Incapacity Benefit claimants will be required to engage in work-related activity than previously. This could lead to a reduction in the number of workless people in Leeds, but it will also require LCC and other providers to work with claimants who may be less willing to engage.
- There is a need to resource and upskill the voluntary and community sector to deliver programmes at the local level.
- There is a need to encourage enterprise and self-employment in areas of the City with high levels of worklessness. The rapid economic growth of the City has largely been the result of medium and large companies which recruit on a regional or national basis, while the growth of small businesses has been much slower than elsewhere in the UK.

3.3 NE to convene a meeting with Ian Hunter (IH) from JobCentre Plus to discuss the strategic approach to worklessness in Leeds and reaffirm the principles underpinning the accord between Leeds City Council and JobCentre Plus. LCC officers to be invited to include Paul Stephens (PS), Development and Martin Dean (MD), Leeds Initiative.

NE

3.4 MG to discuss with RB the undertaking of an audit of activity in Chapeltown to address worklessness. The study would identify the agencies involved, the kind of activities undertaken, the resources deployed and the resulting impacts.

MG/RB

4.0 Area Management Review

4.1 NE presented the Terms of Reference and a series of draft proposals for the review of the Council's approach to Area Management. Stephen Boyle (SB) has been asked to look at the links between the Area Management review and ongoing discussions regarding the council-wide restructure. For example, Children's Services are proposing to develop district delivery arrangements, which could link to the existing activities of the Area

		Action
	Management Teams.	
5.0	Town and District Centres	
5.1	A progress report on Town and District centre regeneration schemes was tabled. NE to raise any issues emerging from the report with Franklin Riley (FR).	NE
6.0	Community Cohesion	
6.1	A progress update from LY on Community Cohesion was tabled. LY is proposing to complete an Annual Report on Community Cohesion activity across all Departments. LY to circulate the format of the report and guidance on the types of activity that Departments need to identify.	LY
7.0	Audit self assessment checklist for Corporate Priority Boards	
7.1	Each Corporate Priority Board is required to complete an audit self assessment checklist to assess their performance. It was agreed that DK and MS should complete the checklist on behalf of the Thriving Communities CPB and bring a draft to the next meeting of the Board for comment. The first hour of the next meeting will be set aside for discussion of the checklist.	DK/MS
7.2	DH suggested that DMT's should be consulted on their perception of links with the CPB.	
7.0	Date of next meeting	
7.1	The next meeting will take place at 14.00-16.00 on 16 October 2006 in the Boardroom, 4 th Floor West, Merrion House.	