

DARTFORD AND GRAVESHAM LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES of the meeting of the Dartford and Gravesham Local Strategic Partnership Executive Board held on 27 September 2005 at the Civic Centre, Dartford.

PRESENT: Councillor A Allen – Kent County Council
Councillor J Burden – Gravesham Borough Council
Mr P Conrad – Groundwork Kent Thames-side
Mr E Falvey – North West Kent Council for Voluntary Service
Ms C Fisher – Government Office for the South East (GOSE)
Mr I Martin – Environment Group
Ms M Peachey – Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT
Mr D Sharma – North West Kent Racial Equality Council
Councillor M Snelling – Kent County Council

Also Present:

Mrs S Free – Kent Thameside Delivery Board
Mr G Harris – Dartford Borough Council
Mr J Wintour – Gravesham Borough Council
Dr A Jefford – Kent County Council
Mrs P Jefford – Gravesham Borough Council
Mr A Gowan – Dartford Borough Council
Ms D Carson – Gravesham Borough Council
Ms M Schlee – Government Office of the South East (GOSE)
Ms J Gill – Dartford Borough Council
Mr J Fisher – Dartford Borough Council
Mr S Hookway – Gravesham Borough Council
Ms B Rambousek – Kent Thameside Delivery Board
Mr I Lindsay – Kent Thameside Delivery Board
Mr S Brooke – Kent Thameside Delivery Board
Mr J Edwins - KTDB / PCT
Ms S Kemmenoe – Land Securities
Councillor G Steele – Dartford Borough Council

61. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor J Burden was proposed, seconded and duly elected as Chairman of the Executive Board.

62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr C Woodley, Gravesham Borough Council, and Ms K Patterson, Sevenoaks District Council. Councillor K Leadbeater had been delayed but hoped to be able to attend the meeting. Ms C Fisher introduced Ms Maria Schlee who would be providing cover during her forthcoming absence on maternity leave.

63. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2005

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2005 were confirmed.

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64. MATTERS ARISING

First meeting of the HIMP Forum

Mr Edwins said a meeting had been arranged for 12 October 2005, at 4pm at Colyer Hall. While the majority of those invited had responded, the Chairman urged partners to ensure that delegates were sent, where appropriate.

Proposed revision of the Community Strategy

The Chairman said that a draft was still with the borough councils. The target was to have a version for agreement at the next meeting of the LSP, on 5 January 2006. He asked both councils to ensure that any delay to progress was resolved.

65. PROPOSALS TO STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE LSP

The Chairman introduced the report which had been tabled at the meeting. The LSP needed to have a strong role and ensure that it delivered on strategies and projects. The report was a draft for consultation, circulated to focus consideration in advance of the next meeting on 5 January 2005; attendees were not asked to read and agree the document at this meeting. In order to move matters forward, however, the Chairman proposed that the Dartford and Gravesham Public Service Board, proposed at paragraph 2.1 of the draft, should meet informally in the meantime.

Mr Harris said that there was a view that the arrangements proposed in the draft would give rise to too many meetings. He re-iterated that the consultation draft presented a genuine opportunity for thorough discussion of the matter.

AGREED:

- (1) That partners consider the content of the draft and send comments to either Christopher Woodley or Adrian Gowan.
- (2) That a further report be prepared for the Board's consideration on 5 January 2005, to conclude the matter.
- (3) That in the interim, the Public Service Board, proposed at paragraph 2.1 of the consultation draft, should meet informally to progress matters.

66. LSP BUDGET

Mr A Gowan introduced the report, which set out the current position of the budget. He understood, although this was apparently not on record, that the LSP had committed £5000 to the reworking of the Community Strategy, which would therefore be paid from the balance for 2005/2006.

Mr Gowan told the meeting that the Racial Equality Council had recently asked the LSP for financial support for the Dartford Mela and questioned whether the LSP should fund such individual requests.

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Mr Harris asked that the provision of £5000 from the LSP budget for the reworking of the Community Strategy be minuted formally.

The Chairman asked that the minutes record appreciation of the work of Ms Stephanie Stanwick, for both the partnership and health services generally.

Mr Falvey said that the LSP had given financial assistance to the first Community Assembly and it was hoped to hold another assembly. He sought a maximum of £1400 from the LSP to facilitate this, a request seconded by Mr Sharma.

Mr Harris thought that bids for consideration at meetings of the Executive Board should be the subject of a report, as matter of good governance.

AGREED:

- (1) That the current budget position be noted.
- (2) That provision from the budget of £5000 for the reworking of the Community Strategy be formally recorded.
- (3) That the request from the Racial Equality Council for financial support for the Dartford Mela be refused.
- (4) That the Board's appreciation of the contribution of Ms Stephanie Stanwick be recorded.
- (5) That the LSP provide funds, to a maximum of £1400, for a second community assembly.
- (6) That bids for funding for consideration at meetings of the Executive Board be the subject of written reports.

67. UPDATE ON CHANGES AT KCC

The Chairman noted the resignation of Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart from the chairmanship of KCC. He wished to place on record, on behalf of the LSP, appreciation of Sir Sandy's work and to wish him well. The meeting concurred.

Dr A Jefford introduced the report, which was a summary of a report to KCC in July. He drew attention to two particular aspects. Paragraph 2.5 noted discussions about local boards. The situation remained fluid. Several pilots for joint boards had been identified, including Dartford. The political paper proposed for Cabinet on 15 September 2005, and referred to at paragraph 4.6, had not yet materialised.

The Chairman noted that greater involvement in government, health, county and borough issues could be expected of LSPs. He looked forward to the results of Dartford's involvement in the joint board pilot study.

AGREED:

- (1) That the County Council changes outlined in the report be noted.
- (2) That the LSP's appreciation of the work and support of Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart be noted.

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68. KENT LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Mr A Gowan introduced the report. Eighteen outcomes had been agreed, closely matching the LSP's priorities as outlined in the Community Strategy. A number of organisations had already signed up to the agreement. There had been some discussions on Performance Reward Grant (PRG) which would be finalised in the coming week. He informed the meeting that all three Freedoms and Flexibilities on the housing outcome, for which the LSP had expressed support at its meeting on 5 April 2005, had been rejected.

Mr Wintour said that he would shortly be meeting government colleagues to discuss freedom and flexibility issues.

Ms Peachey said that the Primary Care Trust supported Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and their principles; some of the targets linked with "Choosing Health". She noted that there was no reference on pump priming to health despite the input of significant resources. She wondered if some of this support could be made available to the LSP.

Mrs Jefford noted that, for a number of partnerships, continuance of jobs depended on finance coming via KCC, and this was creating great uncertainty for staff.

The Chairman said that there had been vigorous debate with KCC about the deployment of resources and he believed that this would be resolved quickly.

AGREED:

(1) That the Board note the position in terms of the Local Area Agreement and the likely role that the LSP would take in helping to deliver the agreed outcomes.

69. NORTHFLEET NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL STUDY – UPDATE

Mr S Hookway gave a presentation, copies of which he had available on CD. The area in question was one of the most deprived in North Kent. A study by consultants had successfully engaged local interest and had produced a list of issues now being converted to actionable projects.

In response to Ms Peachey, Mr Hookway confirmed that the consultation had raised health issues, such as access to GPs and transport to health facilities.

The Chairman referred to Gravesham's support of the work. He saw the project as the beginning of a process of re-connection with the people for whom Councils devised strategies. He thanked Mr Hookway for his presentation.

AGREED:

That the presentation be noted.

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70. SWANSCOMBE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL STUDY – UPDATE

Mr J Fisher gave a presentation. A study in 2003/2004 had resulted in a project list approved by Dartford's Cabinet in December 2004. Sixty three projects in nine themed areas had been prioritised, although not all fell to Dartford Borough Council. A great deal had been delivered to date. He wished to record his appreciation of the contribution made to regeneration by Groundwork Kent Thameside, the Learning Champions, the large number of local volunteers and the two Swanscombe Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

In reply to Councillor Snelling's point about similarities between the two communities covered by the presentations, he agreed that there would be advantages in greater communication between them and the professionals working in them.

The Chairman thanked Mr Fisher for his presentation.

AGREED:

That the presentation be noted.

71. KTDB PROJECT FRAMEWORK

Mrs S Free, introducing the report, noted that it was a mechanism that would support, for example, the work on Northfleet and Swanscombe. The report summarised work in progress. The steering group chaired by Mr Falvey on Community Enterprise Hubs (CEHs) was making real progress and hoped to advertise for a manager in the coming week. The support of Dartford Borough Council for this was appreciated. A fourth project - St Aidan's / Westcourt in Gravesham – had now been agreed.

The Chairman noted from the report that positive progress was being made.

AGREED:

- (1) That progress on the KTDB Project Framework be noted.
- (2) That progress on the CEH project for 2003-2006 be welcomed.

71. EMPLOY KENT THAMESIDE

Mr S Brooke, introducing the report, explained that the Employ Kent Thameside initiative aimed to enable local people to take advantage of the job opportunities emerging from the regeneration of the area. It was driven by best practice at Bluewater and other regeneration sites and aimed to use existing and statutory agencies, thus making it sustainable in the long term. The initiative would kick in once a major development such as the Bridge

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became available but in the meantime activities to raise the profile were being pursued.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

73. URBAN THAMES GATEWAY KENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Ms B Rambousek introduced the report and said that a large number of projects, including those in Northfleet and Swanscombe, were co-funded by the Urban Programme. However, strategy was being reviewed as was the overall impact of the scheme to see how any gaps might be filled. The first phase of the Community Chest had been successfully completed and negotiations about Phase 2 were taking place with positive indications from both local authorities for taking it forward. Mr G Harris commented that, while each scheme was valuable in its own right, there was no mechanism for assessing the overall outcome in order to see whether a difference was actually being made.

Mr I Lindsay said that active consideration was being given as to the best means of assessing the success of schemes.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

74. VICK PROSPECTUS

Mrs S Free introduced the report. VICK was leading the initiative to strengthen the infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector in Kent under the Government's Change-up Programme. She hoped that the final document would offer a radical way forward. The initial response to the questionnaire would be put to a conference in the coming week, with an Infrastructure Development Plan to be agreed early in the New Year.

Mr Sharma noted that VICK was funded only to March 2006.

Ms Peachey said that the PCT would like to be seen as a supportive partner. Mr Lindsay hoped that Ms Peachey would submit comments to Liz Haggart by the 30 September 2005 deadline which would allow the PCT to become involved in the consultation.

AGREED:

That the report be noted

75. DARTFORD CHILDREN'S CONSORTIUM ACTION PLAN 2005 – 2007

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Councillor Allen said that the report was on the agenda for information, being the parallel Dartford document to the Gravesham Plan brought to the meeting on 28 June. It was a very useful base document and she commended it to partners.

AGREED:

That the Dartford Children's Consortium Action Plan 2005-2007 be noted.

76. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman noted that the next meeting would be on 5 January 2006. He hoped that it would take place at Gravesham.

The meeting on 5 January 2006 would be a key meeting as proposals to strengthen strategic leadership and decision making in the LSP (for which the report tabled earlier at item 5 was a consultation document) would be discussed and finalised.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.

Councillor J Burden, Chairman