

**DARTFORD AND GRAVESHAM LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

MINUTES of the meeting of the Dartford and Gravesham Local Strategic Partnership Executive Board held on Thursday 5 January 2006 in the Council Chamber, Gravesham Civic Centre, Windmill Street, Gravesend

PRESENT:

Councillor J Burden (Chairman)	– Gravesham Borough Council
Councillor Mrs A D Allen	– Kent County Council
Mr P Conrad	– Groundwork Kent Thames-side
Mr E Falvey	– North West Kent Council for Voluntary Service
Acting Supt N Jerome (in place of Chief Superintendent G Beautridge)	– Community Safety Partnerships
Mr I Martin	– Environment Group
Ms M Peachey	– Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT
Ms M Schlee	– Government Office for the South East (GOSE)
Mr D Sharma	– North West Kent Racial Equality Council
Councillor M Snelling	– Kent County Council

ALSO

PRESENT:

Mr G Harris	– Dartford Borough Council
Mr J Wintour	– Gravesham Borough Council
Mrs S Free	– Kent Thameside Delivery Board
Mr C Woodley	– Gravesham Borough Council
Mr A Gowan	– Dartford Borough Council
Ms D Carson	– Gravesham Borough Council
Mrs P Jefford	– Gravesham Borough Council

91. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K F M Leadbeater (Dartford Borough Council), Dr A Jefford (KCC), Mr J Edwins (KTDB/PCT) and Mr M Bell (North Kent College).

92. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2005

The minutes of the meeting of 27 September were confirmed.

93. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 69: Northfleet Neighbourhood Renewal Study – Update

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Mr Woodley said that Gravesham Borough Council had agreed the setting-up of a Northfleet committee, to take work forward. It was hoped to make appointments to it at the Annual Council.

Minute 71: KTDB Project Framework

Mrs S Free explained that, because of illness, she had been unable to provide a written report for the meeting. On ODPM funding, the Project Framework sub-group would be putting forward proposals on Community Enterprise Hubs (CEHs) and Community Learning Centres. However, there was a so-far unresolved problem concerning SEEDA funding from 1 April 2006, in connection with proposals to extend and develop the Community Development Programme currently receiving SRB funding. A particular concern was the position of staff in post. Members of the LSP endorsed the value of the work being done by the postholders and the importance of seeking its continuance.

AGREED:

That the LSP write to SEEDA to record their support for the valuable work being done and the importance of its continuing.

Minute 74: VICK Prospectus

Mrs Free said that all partners should have received copies of the draft Kent Infrastructure Development Plan. It was an important document for the future of Kent, and provided a basis for obtaining funding from a variety of sources. She drew attention to the item on growth areas in Kent. Partners were encouraged to put forward views on the document by the closing date of 13 March 2006.

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

The Chairman referred members to the minutes of the Shadow Public Services Board meeting on 30 November 2005, which had been tabled, and to the report before them.

He noted that some clarification of wording was required. References to representatives, on the Public Service Board (PSB), from Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils should be to the Leaders of these councils "or nominated representative" and, with KCC representatives, to the Chairmen of the respective Local Boards "or nominated representative". This would enable the authorities to decide the appropriate representation. He also pointed out that the Shadow Board had endorsed a recommendation for a permanent place on the PSB for a representative of the Racial Equality Council. Thirdly, there had been a request in the summer for churches' representation on LSPs in Kent.

The Chairman commended the arrangements proposed in the report to members.

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In reply to Ms Schlee, Mr Woodley said the comments of the Government Office of the South East (GOSE) had been considered in the drafting of the document for the Shadow PSB's consideration. The report now before the meeting should therefore reflect GOSE's comments.

In reply to Mr Falvey, the Chairman confirmed that there would be one representative from the voluntary sector on the PSB, and one from the REC.

Ms Schlee sought clarification of paragraph 2.10 of the report, that the Urban Programme was to be organised from Dartford. GOSE considered that there was no remit to change the accountable body agreed on by KCC and the Government Office. The Chairman and Mr Harris said that the change involved location of the staff to improve local monitoring and reporting, providing stronger, more relevant links with local authorities so that policies were better directed and delivered. Accountable Body status would remain with KCC. Ms Schlee said that she would take the point back to colleagues at GOSE.

AGREED:

- (1) That references to DBC, GBC and KCC representatives in Appendix 2 to the report (Dartford and Gravesham Public Service Board (PSB) – sections on membership and organisational arrangements) include “or nominated representative”.
- (2) That the North West Kent Racial Equality Council be a member of the PSB in its own right.
- (3) That, subject to the above, the recommendations set out in the report, at paragraphs 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, be accepted, namely:-

6.1 In respect of the outcome from the consultation on the proposals, the Executive Board:

- confirm the recommendations of the Shadow PSB relating to membership of that Board, as set out in the notes of the meeting;
- give consideration to the proposal that the Racial Equality Council should be a member of the PSB, in its own right;
- confirm that, taken together, the proposed Partnership Board and the proposed Public Services Board comprise the Dartford & Gravesham Local Strategic Partnership; and
- confirm the Delivery Board's decision that 'The “community” role and work only in respect of work undertaken by the Delivery Board in strategic co-ordination should transfer to the LSP, with Gravesham to Lead'.

6.2 In respect of the draft proposals, the Executive Board:

- approve the arrangements set out in the document, subject to the acceptance of the amendments arising from the consultation and the recommendations of the Shadow PSB. The draft document is appended to this report (Appendix 1);
- approve that the final form of the document be agreed by the Chairman of the LSP;

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- approve the draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 2) and draft Operating Procedures for the proposed Public Service Board (Appendix 3);
- approve the creation of an administrator's post, with delegated authority granted to the Managing Directors of DBC and GBC to undertake the necessary arrangements;
- approve that a firm of suitably qualified and experienced contractors be engaged to undertake work to strengthen the operational effectiveness of the Partnership. The determination of the scope of that work (including the financial implications) be delegated to the Chairman, in consultation with the Managing Directors of DBC and GBC. The cost of that work, up to a limit of £8,000, be met from the resources provided by the borough councils; and
- approve that the KTDB be offered Associate Status, the terms of Associateship to be submitted for approval at the next meeting of the new Partnership Board.

6.3 In respect of implementing the proposals, the Executive Board:

- approve that the arrangements formally come into force on 1 April 2006;
- request that, prior to that date, each partner be provided with a copy of the new arrangements, signed by the Chairman of the LSP, together with any other information associated with the implementation of those arrangements; and
- approve that information about the new arrangements be sent to other relevant agencies.

(4) That the interfaith grouping be invited to make an inter-faith nomination, to the Partnership Board.

95. COMMUNITY STRATEGY UPDATE

Mr Woodley explained that recent Government publications on the future of LSPs and Community Strategies made it difficult to bring the document to fruition. The LSP should be looking to frame a document with a shorter timescale than planned, but nonetheless anticipating proposals to come from Government. The document could form the basis for agreeing targets and might produce accelerated achievement, overachievement or enrichment of targets. The document, therefore, was a draft, to involve partners. The end of February deadline for colleagues' input was, however, critical.

The Chairman emphasised the need for a response by 28 February 2006. If responses were not forthcoming, Mr Woodley would follow up or, if need be, draft material. It was also important that the document was in clear, plain language, with well set out targets and without the need to go back to reference documents. It would also be necessary to revisit the agreed

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document as the year proceeded, with a view to devising a longer scale document for the future.

In reply to Mrs Jefford's query as to whether the Community Safety targets had been agreed by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), Mr Woodley said that he understood that the targets had come from the community safety strategies of Dartford and of Gravesham. The Chairman suggested that Mr Woodley and Mrs Jefford discuss this aspect further. Councillor Snelling believed that a joint target was needed. He referred to KCC's increased liaison with police and thought that it would be helpful if KCC were part of the dialogue. Mrs Jefford noted that the CDRP included KCC.

Ms Peachey said that health targets could be provided easily by 28 February; smoking was a likely candidate.

AGREED:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That partners comment on the draft by 28 February 2006.
- (3) That Mr Woodley thereafter press for responses, or draft material in the absence of response.
- (4) That targets be expressed clearly and simply, and be self contained if possible.
- (5) That the document be revisited and reviewed as the year proceeds, with a view to producing a fuller document for the future.
- (6) That the consultation process, the final form of the Community Strategy update and the publication of the document be co-ordinated through the proposed Public Service Board, subject to the new arrangements being adopted;
- (7) That the expenditure of funds, up to a limit of £7,000 (subject to funds being identified), to cover the costs associated with the development and publication of the Community Strategy update be approved.
- (8) That the Community Strategy update be formally launched at the Partnership's meeting scheduled for June 2006.

96. COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY

Mr Falvey reported that the Assembly, which had been very successful, had focussed on developing the COMPACT. He noted that £800 of the £1400 budget had been spent to date and that they would remain within budget.

Mr Wintour confirmed the success of the Assembly.

AGREED:

1. That the comments from the Assembly be received and accepted;
2. That the Community Forum Structure as proposed be endorsed:

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3. That the initial proposals and draft codes, by 31 March 2006, for the formal establishing of a COMPACT for Dartford and Gravesham, be received.

97. COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE HUBS

Mr Falvey introduced the report which updated members on the progress of Community Enterprise Hubs. £38,200 was as yet unallocated but, with increased costs identified for two projects, he was confident that this money would be used by March. On Mapping and Gapping, tender documents had been issued, for return on 13 January. NWKCVS would be tendering.

AGREED;

That the progress on the CEH project for 2003-2006 be noted.

98. LSP BUDGET

Mr Gowan noted that, since the previous budget report, £5000 had been allocated for updating the Community Strategy and £1400 had been allocated to the Community Forum.

The Chairman pointed to the importance of keeping programmes and projects within budget or finding any extra funding needed. The LSP would greatly welcome continued financial support from the PCT.

Ms Peachey said that a bid had been made for another £10,000 for the LSP, for the next two years. However, no decision had yet been made.

AGREED:

That the current budget position be noted.

99. FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY FORUM COORDINATOR 2006/07

Mr Falvey introduced the report. The post had proved to be invaluable, particularly where smaller community groups were concerned. Of the £10,000 provided for the current year, £1972 remained. Set-up funding of £5650 was awaited from Dartford Borough Council.

Mr Gowan said that Dartford Borough Council had raised the cheque for the set-up funding in September. He was following up the matter.

The Chairman acknowledged the value of the co-ordinator post but reminded members that it had been provided from money from the PCT, to whom it would be necessary to look for continued support. He proposed that any decision be held in abeyance until the funding position was known.

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AGREED:

That no decision to approve funding to support the role of the Community Forum Co-ordinator for 2006/07 be made until the funding position vis a vis the PCT was known.

100. HEALTH IMPROVEMENT FORUM

Ms Peachey introduced the report, which summarised the work of the first meeting of the HIMP Core Group and of the Health Improvement Forum. The November Forum had been well attended, with appropriate representation. The Forum scheduled for 11 January had had to be deferred. A new date would be agreed as soon as possible.

Mr Sharma agreed about the success of the event. He was concerned, however, that policy decisions were being made before matters came to the Forum, thus weakening the Forum's role. Ms Peachey thought that this was not the case; it was simply that it had been necessary for the first meeting to identify priorities.

Mrs Jefford said that the Forum had been an opportunity for the LSP to influence Choosing Health monies as there had been senior local authority representation. The Core Group had taken the Forum's advice as to priorities on board. However, there was no certainty that finance would go to Choosing Health priorities. She suggested that, if the LSP felt strongly about Choosing Health monies going to Choosing Health priorities, it might write to the Chair of the PCT setting out its views and requesting finance for specified projects.

Mr Harris asked how the LSP could identify what it needed to do to support health agendas, and whether, and if so how, work by other agencies, such as the sports work by Dartford Borough Council, fitted in. Ms Peachey acknowledged that bids were generally constructed with monies from a variety of sources, and agreed that future reports ought to reflect all contributions and responsibilities.

AGREED:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the LSP write to the Chair of the PCT expressing its concern that Choosing Health monies should go to Choosing Health priorities.
- (3) That future reports reflect the contributions and responsibilities of the various sources involved in providing monies.

101. URBAN THAMES GATEWAY KENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

Ms S Clarke introduced the report which updated members on the Urban programme. The ODPM Mid-Term Evaluation final report had now been received, including the recommendation that Impact and Legacy be given higher priority. Barabara Rambousek had started work on this before her

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departure and Ms Clarke was meeting KCC on 16 January to discuss financing. The report covered the UK but it was hoped to put the Thames Gateway material on the KTDB website.

Mr Harris said that Urban posed problems similar to those of the health agenda. It was difficult to tie all projects together, to see how they fitted into global projects for the area. The Chairman said this pointed to the importance of setting up support for the LSP, to provide co-ordinated direction and action. A budget of around £30,000 would be required to provide the necessary support and it was for the local authorities to pick up on this in their budget cycles.

Councillor Snelling welcomed the final report as offering greater understanding and measurement of projects.

Mr Sharma expressed concern at what he perceived was the uneven geographical spread of projects. Ms Clarke pointed out that projects had to be assessed according to need.

AGREED:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the minutes record the importance of setting up support for the LSP, to provide co-ordinated direction and action, and note that the budget of around £30,000 required to provide such support would be for the local authorities to pick up on in their budget cycles.

102. THE EQUALITIES BILL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The Chairman had agreed the late inclusion of the item as it concerned Parliamentary business which would be completed before the next meeting of the LSP.

Mr Gowan said that Dartford Borough Council had been contacted by the REC because of concerns that there was nothing in the Equalities Bill to support the retention of RECs or the £4 million funding which they received from Government. The REC played a major role in the area, supporting public bodies and communities, and doing case work. If RECs were not retained, this work would have to be picked up by either borough councils or the voluntary sector. The Dartford Cabinet had agreed to write to Government to ask for the retention of RECs and their funding. The Cabinet had asked the LSP for its support.

Councillor Allen declared a non pecuniary interest, as she is a KCC appointee to the Commission for Racial Equality. Mr Sharma declared a pecuniary interest as he is the Director of the North West Kent Council for Racial Equality.

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Ms Schlee understood from colleagues at GOSE that there was no intention to abolish RECs, simply to bring them under an umbrella commission. In reply to Councillor Snelling, she said she would ask colleagues at the Government Office if they could provide assurances that the Government would fund any work devolving on local authorities as a result of the bill.

The Chairman and Ms Peachey agreed that the independent status of the RECs was important. The Chairman said that the bill was being considered by the Gravesham Cabinet later in the month and it was agreed that the LSP would wait until after then to write to Government.

AGREED:

- (1) That the LSP inform the Government of the important work undertaken by the North West Kent REC and its support for the retention of Race Equality Councils.
- (2) That the LSP seek assurances from the Government that funding for Race Equality Councils, and similar organisations will continue to be provided via Central Government Grants, and seek assurances that local authorities will not be expected to meet any funding shortfall.
- (3) That the approach to Government on the above matters be made only after the Gravesham Cabinet had had the opportunity to discuss the bill and its implications.

103. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman told members that Clair Fisher (GOSE) had given birth to a son and daughter in November and that Suzanne Kemmenoe (Land Securities) had had a daughter in December. Members wished mothers and children well.

It was the last meeting to be attended by Mrs Susan Free who would shortly be retiring as Director of Communities at the Delivery Board. The Chairman thanked Mrs Free for all she had done to further the work of the partnership, and made her a presentation. Mrs Free thanked members. She was grateful for the support she had had from Councillors Burden and Allen, as Chairmen, and from Christopher Woodley, Adrian Gowan, Kenneth Lawrie, Deborah Carson and Member Services at Dartford Borough Council. It had been very rewarding to see the work of the partnership moving forward on a variety of fronts.

104. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:

The next meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership Board would be on Tuesday 6 June 2006 at Dartford Civic Centre. It was hoped that the following meeting – on Tuesday 12 December - would be at Gravesham Civic Centre, building works permitting.

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The meeting closed at 4.10 pm

Councillor J Burden
CHAIRMAN