

Tuesday 21 June 2010 at 2.00pm

Membership

Councillors

Joyce Bosnjak (Chair)
Chris Barnfather ●
Michael Bennett ●
Martin Wright
Brian Wombwell

● absent

Officers

Keith Ford – Senior Governance Officer
Matthew Garrard – Senior Scrutiny Officer

Others in attendance

Councillor John Wilmott)
Mark Gwynne) Ashfield District Council
Mike Joy)
Deborah Widdowson – Ashfield Partnership
Lance Juby – Gedling Borough Council
Alison Rae – Nottinghamshire County LINK

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bennett (who was ill) and Councillor Barnfather.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interests were made.

3. Gedling Partnership

Lance Juby, Policy and Performance Manager, Gedling Borough Council, circulated a briefing paper at the meeting which outlined key achievements, Case Studies, Partnership composition, means of democratic and community engagement and funding for 2010/11. Mr Juby explained that his role included co-ordination of Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) activity, including issues of performance management.

In response to Members' queries, the following points were clarified: -

- due to the relatively small levels of deprivation in Gedling Borough overall, there had been a lack of external funding for the Partnership in the past. This had led to a culture of targeting areas and working with agencies to utilise mainstream resources wherever possible. The Partnership's Board had agreed to use the Local Area Agreement Reward Grant funding of £349,000 for 2010/11 to top up existing budgets for partnership working (largely held by Gedling Borough Council) rather than using this money to make a number of small grants to various organisations;
- the Partnership aimed to ensure that the benefits of projects such as the Netherfield Healthy Month (details of which were circulated at the meeting) and the Goals Project (which was organised in conjunction with Nottingham Forest) could be sustained on a long-term basis. Local partnership working enabled key players to get together, share ideas and come up with more innovative approaches to solving problems, as illustrated by the recent 'Street Doctor' scheme, which targeted men's health in particular;
- Gedling Borough Council employed Neighbourhood Co-ordinators who helped to facilitate partnership working. NHS Nottinghamshire County also provided officer time in that respect. The Council's funding agreements with local community and voluntary services were dependent on those organisations meeting relevant Community Strategy priorities. The Council's key role in supporting partnership working was underlined;
- Caroline Baria and Councillor Chris Barnfather were the Nottinghamshire County Council officer and Member representatives on the Board. Another NCC officer, Derek Higton, had also recently been appointed to the Board as Children and Young Person's Lead. Attendance of NCC officers and members at Board meetings had been good. The challenge faced by officers from a single department in representing the corporate views and progressing agreed actions of a large organisation such as NCC was recognised and it was highlighted that this could reflect badly on NCC. NCC officer representation on other Partnership groups had been consistent and relevant staff, such as detached youth workers, had also been involved in initiatives such as the Netherfield Healthy Month;
- the Partnership had two operational delivery groups (Children and Young People's and Health), although the Crime and Disorder Partnership was essentially a third delivery group. The rest of the Partnership's work was either undertaken in neighbourhoods or by task and finish groups on specific issues. The Partnership favoured an action-based approach, rather than being focussed around meetings. It was underlined that the Partnership shared priorities with Gedling Borough Council but that rather than duplicating work, a partnership approach was used to add value wherever possible. In some circumstances, an officer was tasked to meet with partners outside of a formal partnership structure as an alternative to setting up a group, for example, with the issue of economic development;

- the Policy and Performance Manager post was funded by Gedling Borough Council and 50-60% of this post's current workload was LSP related;
- NHS Nottinghamshire County had halved its funding to the Gedling Health and Wellbeing Fund to £50,000 in 2010/11 and other LSPs may face similar reductions in funding;
- although the Borough Council would retain control of the Gedling Youth Initiatives Fund, partners would have a greater say in these decisions in 2010/11.

4. Ashfield Partnership

Deborah Widdowson, Partnership Manager for Ashfield Partnership, and Councillor John Wilmott, Chair of the Ashfield Partnership, gave a presentation highlighting the following key issues and responding to issues raised by Members: -

- Ashfield had received Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) money up to 2007 and this had shaped the working of the Partnership and had helped to increase engagement. When this funding stopped, engagement and representation on the Partnership was affected. The transitional funding available over the last two years had been used to mainstream and continue schemes through partner agencies, for example, Ashfield District Council agreed to invest into the previously successful Neighbourhood Wardens Service, renaming, rebranding and widening the remit of this service to deal with anti-social behaviour. The current lack of funding ensured that the people now involved in the Partnership were committed to making a difference and this also increased the need to focus on specific, targeted, issues;
- joint working with the Community Safety Partnership was ongoing. Mansfield and Ashfield Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships had joint Performance and Priority Action Groups and there remained a possibility that the Strategy Groups would also be merged in the future. The Partnership's Children and Young People and Health groups were joint Ashfield/Mansfield groups. Lance Juby highlighted that the South Nottinghamshire Community Partnership was a joint Gedling and Broxtowe group, reflecting the Police Divisional boundaries and preventing duplication of officer time. It was highlighted that LSPs led to officers from other countywide partners such as NHS Nottinghamshire County, attending multiple partnerships;
- the Partnership's achievements included: -
 - a very successful Community Pot participatory budgeting event in the Sutton West Ward, funded by contributions from individual Councillors' budgets, which had been very successful in terms of community engagement. It was hoped that further such events could be held in other parts of Ashfield, subject to funding being available. This work was led by the Neighbourhood Governance Officer, which was a two year post set up to co-ordinate issues in neighbourhoods;

- an event was being held on 24 June 2010 to launch a booklet aimed at preventing falls at home. This event would also be used to consult the community about Community Strategy priorities;
- local health initiatives aimed to tackle obesity and physical inactivity, including via the Active Ashfield Partnership and the Adizone outdoor gym, dance and aerobics area in Ashfield;
- a lot of joint working was being undertaken in response to the current economic situation and the potential for a joint Ashfield / Mansfield Economic Masterplan was being explored. Also, the Partnership was feeding into the work around the Sherwood Forest Area Housing Strategy to ensure that infrastructure issues were also being addressed as appropriate;
- the Stronger Communities Partnership was working to strengthen engagement and empowerment, including exploring means of linking together any consultation exercises planned by the various agencies in order to bring savings and prevent duplication. Lance Juby stated that the Gedling Partnership was undertaking similar work and Councillor Bosnjak highlighted that this issue had been raised six years ago when the Countywide Partnership was being considered. The local empowerment agenda was also being addressed through the commissioning of ten days of local improvement advisor support from the East Midlands Empowerment Partnership;
- following the 2007 Peer Challenge, the Partnership decided to go for a much more focussed and strategic Board (the Executive), which now comprised of six voting members (with substitutes also allowed to enable decision making). Councillor John Wilmott was Chair of the Executive and the Community Safety Partnership and Ashfield District and Nottinghamshire County Councillor Mick Murphy also had a seat. Other councillors were invited to relevant Partnership activities, such as the two recent planning days for the Community Strategy refresh. The Partnership Assembly was a wider forum, open to other interested bodies, and this met twice a year to inform Partnership priorities. As part of the planned review of the Partnership's Constitution it was envisaged that the Assembly would become the Partnership Forum and would meet four times a year, with all elected members in the district invited. Any suggestions on improving democratic engagement were welcomed;
- under the new Constitution, the Performance Management Group would become the Executive Performance Support Group (EPSG) with a wider remit, broader membership and increased support function to (and improved two-way relationship with) the Executive. There were six themed partnerships beneath the EPSG which mirrored the County Partnership themes of Community Safety, Children and Young People, Economic Regeneration, Environment, Stronger Communities and Health and Wellbeing. NCC was represented on all of these partnerships, with greater representation on some groups, such as the Children and Young People group, as appropriate. A new template for the delivery plans of the thematic partnerships had been developed to enable the delivery of

the priorities of the refreshed Community Strategy (which was going to the Executive on 12 July 2010, Ashfield District Council Cabinet on 15 July 2010 and then on to Full Council). The five cross-cutting priorities which had been identified as issues facing all agencies were: - parenting and families; alcohol issues; cohesion; engagement and worklessness. The LAA Reward Grant funding in Ashfield would be used to address these priorities;

- the post of Partnership Manager was funded solely by the Partnership, with the contract renewed on an annual basis. A small overheads budget was available to cover room hire and refreshments but there was no money for activities, which instead were funded by the four statutory agency partners. If NCC was to withdraw its funding it would have a significant impact on the Partnership. NRF money had previously been used to fund staff employed by the Partnership. It was felt that, with funding becoming tighter, there was more need for agencies to work in partnership to share resources and avoid duplication. Lance Juby underlined that, due to the lack of funding in Gedling, partnership working had always been driven by goodwill, that Gedling Borough Council and NHS Nottinghamshire had funded partnership posts (or posts with a partnership element), but that small allocations of funding had also been important in stimulating activity;
- with regard to feeding back the work of the Partnership to elected Members, Councillor Wilmott underlined that this was a two-way process, with Members' views also informing the Partnership's priorities. Members also had a key role in informing the public about the work of the Partnership via their ward walks, canvassing and surgeries. The Partnership had also tried to engage members of the public through consultation events in local supermarkets. The Partnership had also considered feeding back on Partnership activity on a local basis to Members. Lance Juby underlined the differing levels of Member engagement in Gedling, problems of information overload to Members and the limited attendance at previous Member Briefings. In Ashfield, elected members had been invited to attend a consultation event about the commissioning process for achieving the five cross-cutting priorities (5 Members attended). NCC Partnership Officers attended LSP meetings and NCC Members' Forums and could therefore serve as a link between these bodies. Any NCC elected Members who were members of the LSPs could also serve this link purpose. Councillor Wombwell underlined the increasing importance of elected Member involvement in the LSPs but highlighted that he himself had no involvement currently.

Councillor Bosnjak thanked Mr Juby, Ms Widdowson and Councillor Wilmott for their input into the review.

5. Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership

Due to the unavailability of the Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership Chair, this item was deferred to a future meeting.

6. Review Programme

The Review Programme was noted.

The meeting closed at 3.58 pm.

CHAIR

Ref: m_21Jun10