The West of England Partnership

Board Meeting

4 July 2008
The Council House, Bristol

Present:

Bath and North-East Somerset
Cllr Francine Haeberling
Cllr Paul Crossley

North Somerset Council
Cllr Nigel Ashton
Cllr Elfan Ap Rees
Cllr Nan Kirsen

Bristol City Council
Cllr Helen Holland (Chair)
Cllr Gary Hopkins
Cllr Richard Eddy

South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr John Calway
Cllr Ruth Davis
Cllr Roger Hutchinson

Social, Economic & Environmental Partners
John Savage, Executive Chairman, Business West
Steve Grainger, Avon Biodiversity Partnership
Martina Peattie, ChangeUp Consortia

Observers
Hilary Neal, Government Office for the South West (GOSW)
Ann O'Driscoll, South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)
Stuart Todd, South West Regional Assembly

In attendance
John Everitt, Chief Executive, Bath and North East Somerset Council
Jan Ormondroyd, Chief Executive, Bristol City Council
Jenny Ford, External Relations Manager, Bristol City Council
Graham Turner, Chief Executive, North Somerset Council
Karuna Tharmananthar, Assistant Director of Development and Environment, North Somerset Council
Amanda Deeks, Chief Executive, South Gloucestershire Council
Terry Wagstaff, Interim Chief Executive, West of England Partnership
Sally Gregory, Policy Officer, West of England Partnership

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Barbara Janke, Bristol City Council
Prof. David Clark, University of Bristol
Sonia Mills, North Bristol NHS Trust
Peter Brown, South West Regional Assembly
Ian Knight, South West Regional Development Agency

David Rapley, Wiltshire County Council
Paul Hickson, Somerset County Council
David Halkyard, Gloucestershire County Council

2. ANNUAL BUSINESS

Election of Chair:
Resolved:
That Cllr Helen Holland (Bristol) be elected as Chair.

Election of Vice Chair:
Resolved:
That John Savage be elected as Vice Chair.

Chief Executive

(Terry Wagstaff left the room for this item). John Everitt (BANES) noted that since Simon Birch had moved on Terry Wagstaff had been working part-time with the Partnership. He said that the authorities had asked for Terry Wagstaff to be seconded to the Partnership for a period of two years, during the governance changes and the establishment of the delivery company, subject to discussions which were taking place about the details. This was welcomed.

Resolved:
This action was supported.

Membership

It was noted that it would be up to the members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee to decide how it would work, how the committee would be made up, how they would carry out their business and what their schedule would be.

Stuart Todd (South West Regional Assembly) asked that the relevant organisations were added as observers to the Planning, Housing and Communities Board and this was agreed in principle.

Resolved that the Partnership:
Confirms the membership, with the following changes -

- **That the Interim Chief Executive is authorised, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to nominate to the next board an additional Social, Economic & Environmental Partner to take-up the current vacancy, observing the criteria set out in the Constitution;**
- **That an additional Observer is nominated by English Partnerships or the Housing Corporation;**
- **That the attendance at the Board by the Chairs of the specialist bodies listed in the report is approved, together with the right to speak on matters relevant to their responsibilities**
- **That the Chairs of the specialist bodies be identified, and account be taken of rotating chairs.**

Partnership Board Work Programme

A draft programme was circulated. Cllr Gary Hopkins (Bristol) was concerned that there may not be enough time to allow for challenge of the details of the waste Outline Business Case. It was confirmed that there was an intention to provide these details in time to allow a challenge.

In relation to the delivery company, Terry Wagstaff said that a legal advisor had been appointed by the unitary authorities to assist in the establishment of the Delivery Company.

It was requested that the Partnership Office investigate holding board meetings later in the day. It was also requested that papers were sent out earlier because of the need for consultation with others about the content prior to the meetings.

Budget

Terry Wagstaff withdrew this item and said he would be in a position at the next meeting to say more about the items listed at 6.2.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING ON 14th MARCH

Cllr Nan Kirsen (North Somerset) was wrongly listed as having given apologies, and had been present.

Resolved:
That this change be made and the minutes be noted.

4. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None had been received.

5. UPDATE ON PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY

Barbara Davies introduced the transport section of the report. Cllr Helen Holland (Bristol) said she hoped that the Joint Scrutiny Committee would be involved in the scrutiny of transport decisions, particularly because the new governance arrangements had been vital to getting approval for the Greater Bristol Bus Network. Cllr Gary Hopkins (Bristol) asked if it would be possible to substitute ultra light rail for bus rapid transit. Barbara Davies said that a review was being carried out which would consider a range of technologies and assessing them technically, in terms of value for money, etc. Hilary Neal (GOSW) said that whatever was submitted would be subject to rigorous scrutiny by the Department for Transport and there would be no solution which was discounted from the start.

John Everitt (BANES) asked for reporting on an exception basis, where targets had not been achieved and was informed that it had been air quality targets in Bristol and in Bath which had failed to be achieved.

Cllr Ruth Davis (South Gloucestershire) was concerned about the potential for the current economic situation to have huge implications for the delivery of houses. Cllr Helen Holland asked for the Housing Group to do a note to the Partnership and suggested that Bob Kerslake, Chief Executive of the new Homes and Communities Agency be invited to talk to the Partnership. Cllr Ap Rees (North Somerset) said he thought co-ordination within government was an issue and it would be helpful to have representatives from all the government agencies. Hilary Neal said that GOSW was working to try to ensure that government was joined up and was in touch with all the agencies. She would be happy to work with the Partnership to set a workshop up.

Cllr Gary Hopkins was concerned that the government was not accepting the speed of change at present. Cllr Helen Holland disagreed and said that Iain Wright MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State had attended a recent meeting and had wanted to talk about the changes to delivery plans.

Terry Wagstaff said that the Housing and Communities Agency was looking at this and that the housing trajectories in the LAAs had been depressed. Cllr Nan Kirsen (North Somerset) asked for a report back and said that where a developer had pulled out of a scheme, it would be useful to know the difference this would make. Cllr Helen Holland suggested that it would be useful to link this to inviting the agencies to a meeting, with this information forming a helpful background paper.

Resolved that:

- **GOSW and the Partnership Office work together to set up a workshop with Bob Kerslake and possibly Iain Wright**
- **Housing colleagues be asked to put together a background paper.**

6. WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRESS

Terry Wagstaff introduced the report and said that there were 4 strands to the work: waste reduction and recycling; interim waste treatment arrangements; the DEFRA submission in relation to long-term waste treatment arrangements up to 2020; and arrangements beyond 2020.

Cllr Paul Crossley (BANES) said that BANES was not interested in energy from waste and that this was the wrong decision. Terry Wagstaff said that DEFRA required a reference project for the submission, but that this may not be the final solution agreed by the other three councils.

Cllr Gary Hopkins (Bristol) thought that the timetable didn’t allow for change to the proposals. He was also concerned that the report excluded details of what commitments would be involved and who would be involved, whether the scheme would be value for money and whether there was a conflict of interest between the officers working for the Partnership and working for the individual authorities. Terry Wagstaff said that the evaluation criteria would be key and that officers would be serving the Waste Partnership by getting the best result for the sub-region.

Cllr John Calway (South Gloucestershire) thought that there should be a clear division between Joint Scrutiny and the Partnership Board, and that members should not be able to serve on both. Terry Wagstaff said he would get legal advise on this issue. John Everitt (Banes) said he thought they should be separate whatever the advice.

Resolved:
That the report be noted.

7. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Terry Wagstaff outlined the current position.

Resolved:
That the board note the progress made and further developments planned.

8. UPDATE ON CORE CITIES ACTIVITY

Jenny Ford (Bristol) said that the report on financing major infrastructure would be published in the next two weeks and she would circulate it. It was reiterated that Bristol made clear in Core Cities meetings that it did not speak on behalf of the West of England.

Resolved that:
The Core Cities minutes would be made available to the other councils.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 19 September at BAWA, Southmead Road, Filton followed by a sandwich lunch.