

The West of England Partnership

Board Meeting

24 October 2008
Council House, Bristol

Present:

Bath and North-East Somerset

Cllr Francine Haeberling
Cllr Paul Crossley
Cllr David Speirs

Bristol City Council

Cllr Helen Holland (Chair)
Cllr Barbara Janke
Cllr Richard Eddy

North Somerset Council

Cllr Nigel Ashton
Cllr Elfan Ap Rees
Cllr Nan Kirsan

South Gloucestershire Council

Cllr John Calway
Cllr Ruth Davis
Cllr Roger Hutchinson

Social, Economic & Environmental Partners

John Savage, Business West
Steve Grainger, Avon Biodiversity Partnership
Rachel Robinson, ChangeUp Consortia
Ian Ducat, SWTUC

Observers

Kevin Tinsley, Government Office for the South West (GOSW)
Ian Knight, South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)

In attendance

Peter Rowntree, Bath and North East Somerset Council
Jan Ormondroyd, Chief Executive, Bristol City Council
Graham Turner, Chief Executive, North Somerset Council
David Turner, Director, North Somerset Council
Amanda Deeks, Chief Executive, South Gloucestershire Council
Peter Jackson, South Gloucestershire Council
Terry Wagstaff, Chief Executive, West of England Partnership
Sally Gregory, West of England Partnership

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Adrian Inker
Sonia Mills, North Bristol NHS Trust
Len Hall, Bristol University
Stuart Todd, SW Regional Assembly Secretariat

David Rapley, Wiltshire County Council

2. MINUTES OF MEETING ON 19 SEPTEMBER

Some amendments were required to the attendance and apologies sections.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

3. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

None had been received.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

Sally Gregory said that the Programme of Development for Growth Points had been submitted to access funding for the following two years, for which they had been given an indicative allocation of £15.5m. They understood that there may be further funding available and the Programme included an aspirational list of projects from all four authorities and from the Green Infrastructure Group. It was expected that the government would notify the Partnership of the outcome within about 5 weeks and then the projects for 2009/10 would be prioritised.

South Gloucestershire circulated a paper with proposed amendments, including a proposal for a collective prioritisation exercise by the local authorities, similar to that which followed the first round of Growth Point funding, expected to take place in November/December.

Steve Grainger said that the process was unsatisfactory because he had not, as a Board member, had a chance to input. Terry Wagstaff said that, following discussions with environmental agencies, Jon Clark had met with the Project Board and submitted a green infrastructure project, which Terry had understood was on behalf of the Green Infrastructure Group.

Cllr Roger Hutchinson (South Gloucestershire) said that, although he understood the speed at which the Partnership had to work, the SEEPs should be copied into what was going on and it was their responsibility to share the information with others in their sector.

Terry Wagstaff offered to organise a forum/briefing for SEEPs between Partnership meetings.

Resolved that:

- 1. A progress update on the Growth Point bid be presented to the Partnership Board once the formal announcement on the allocation for the West of England has been made by CLG.**

- 2. An outline of the proposed scope and work programme for the second phase of the West of England Infrastructure Delivery Plan be presented at a future Partnership Board meeting.**

5. JOINT WASTE CORE STRATEGY

Terry Wagstaff said that this was the first waste Development Plan Document. The councils were under a statutory obligation to identify adequate sites for waste facilities. The next stage was for the consultation draft to be considered by the councils' Cabinets.

Cllr Ruth Davis (South Gloucestershire) asked if consideration could be given to the fuelling of Bus Rapid Transit by waste and Terry Wagstaff said that the use of by-products had been taken into account.

Resolved:

That the current progress, actions and implementation timetable be noted.

6. JOINT WASTE STRATEGY

Terry Wagstaff said that all four councils were committed to stepping up recycling and to procuring an interim capacity under Phase 2, which would be a 5 year contract. Joint Scrutiny had provided many comments on the proposals; for example, resulting in sustainability constituting 25% of the contract evaluation criteria. The OJEU process, under which notice had been expected to be given on 17 October was currently stalled, but it was expected that it would be signed off within days.

Extensive discussion had taken place on Phase 3, in which Bath & NE Somerset Council was not involved. It was potentially a 28 year contract and an application was being made to DEFRA for PFI credits. However, if these were granted, the councils would not be obliged to use them. The contract evaluation criteria, which would focus on how the Partnership got the most sustainable solution which was also value for money, were yet to be drawn up.

Thanks were given to Cllr Barbara Lewis and Joint Scrutiny members, and to officers who had all put in substantial time on these proposals.

Resolved that:

- 1. Subject to agreement by the councils' Cabinets, the Board endorses the progress taking place to secure the sub-regional treatment capacity**
(Cllr Barbara Janke voting against)
- 2. The Board endorses the OBC for Phase 3.**
(Cllr Paul Crossley abstained from voting)

7. RURAL STRATEGY

Sally Gregory introduced the report saying that the Rural Strategy Group, since deciding to update the rural strategy had held 3 workshops and discussed the role of the group. The strategy was based on the West of England Vision and identified general actions to take it forward. Further work needed to be done with the appropriate agencies to clarify the detail of how these actions should be carried forward. The report also outlined the future focus for the group.

Cllr Helen Holland stressed the importance of rural proofing.

Resolved that:

- 1. The draft strategy be approved for consultation**
- 2. The future focus on the Rural Strategy Group be noted.**

8. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

South Gloucestershire circulated and explained suggested changes, based on a feeling that the Partnership had been too accepting of the changes proposed by the government. The inclusion of comments clarifying support, objection of noting of changed was welcomed. North Somerset and BANES also proposed changes and the meeting adjourned while these were considered by each council.

When the meeting reconvened, John Savage said, on behalf of the SEEPs, that they generally supported the comments and completely agreed about the arbitrariness of the housing numbers. They wanted the numbers to be fixed and for progress to be made. He also understood the geographical issues raised and supported the expressed need for infrastructure. They also had a deep concern that sustainability was not lost sight of and stressed the need to keep the cost of housing in the sub-region down.

Resolved that:

- 1. Detailed changes were agreed**
- 2. An amended version would be circulated before despatch to meet the consultation deadline later in the day.**

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10am on Friday 5 December at The Campus in Weston-super-Mare

****Please note change in time and venue from that previously circulated.**