

**Minutes of the Cheshire Governance Board  
25 July 2008  
Walton Hall, Walton Gardens, Warrington**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Paul Findlow (Chairman)	Cheshire County Council
John Barber	Learning & Skills Council
Cllr John Hammond	Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council
Cllr Margaret Parker	Chester City Council
Roger Parkin	Cheshire Association of Local Councils
Jane Trevor	Job Centre Plus
Wendy Wright	Communities of Cheshire Partnership

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Paul Ancell	Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council
Alison Armstrong	Cheshire County Council
Clare Babbs	Chester City Council
Gavin Butler	Cheshire County Council
Peter Forrester (item 2)	Audit Commission
Judith Gibson	Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership
Lisa Green	Cheshire County Council
Chris Hardy	Chester City Council
Brenda Harvey	Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council
Kirstie Hercules	Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council
Helen Rowley	Macclesfield Borough Council
Jeremy Taylor	Cheshire County Council

**APOLOGIES:**

Martin Bracegirdle	Connexions
Greg Burke	GONW
Nigel Burke	GONW
Glyn Chambers	Congleton Borough Council
Moira Chapman	Cheshire Police Authority
John Church	Western Cheshire PCT
Liz Davis	Learning & Skills Council
Cllr Les Ford	Vale Royal Borough Council
Vivienne Horton	Macclesfield Borough Council
Pauline Ong	Central & Eastern Cheshire PCT
Mark Wilson	Job Centre Plus

**1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS & NOTES OF LAST MEETING**

Cllr Paul Findlow opened the meeting by welcoming partners. General introductions were made of all those present.

**AGREED: that the notes of the meeting held on 25 April 2008 be approved with the addition of apologies received from Roger Parkin (Cheshire Association of Local Councils) and Jeremy Taylor (Cheshire County Council) .**

## **2 CHESHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2007 – 10: OUTTURN PERFORMANCE REPORT INCLUDING LPSA TARGET PERFORMANCE**

Alison Armstrong, Partnerships Business Unit, presented the interim outturn report for the first year of the Cheshire Local Area Agreement 2007-11. Partners were reminded of the background to Local Area Agreements and the content of the Cheshire LAA.

Specific attention was drawn to the summary of performance across each of the 15 high level outcomes (Level 1) drawn from sub-outcome (Level 2) information received to date. With the information available at this stage, the outturn position was a mixed one with seven of the 54 sub-outcomes showing 'RED', 21 showing 'AMBER' and 26 showing 'GREEN'. The seven 'RED' sub-outcomes related to:

- Building positive parenting and reduce youth re-offending
- Attainment at the end of the foundation stage
- Looked after children attainment
- Reducing teenage pregnancy
- Improving child health
- Closing the worklessness gap between the worst wards in Cheshire and the English average
- Developing skills to meet the needs of employers

Consideration was also given to the final LPSA performance position based on audited information available to date. Roger Parkin (ChALC) requested further background information relating to Target 10 (Community energy) and Target 11 (Improving housing standards in Cheshire).

Target 2 – Building Positive Parenting – had underperformed against one of its two indicators measuring overall recidivism over a two year period for a cohort of offenders from 2005. The outturn figures from the Youth Offending Team had reported an actual recidivism rate for the cohort as 53.2% compared to the 48.1% target. This trend was highlighted as a national issue based upon changes in the guidance for collecting data and subsequent reporting.

**AGREED: that the first year interim outturn report for the Cheshire Local Area Agreement 2007-10, including interim outturn against the second generation Local Public Service Agreement be received.**

## **3 CHESHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2008 – 11: UPDATE**

Lisa Green, Lead Officer for the Cheshire Local Area Agreement, provided an update on the submission and delivery of the new 'transitional severable' Cheshire Local Area Agreement for 2008 – 2011.

Partners and thematic block co-ordinators were thanked for their hard work in preparing for the 'new style' LAA and the identification and agreement of targets. However, the key challenge would be the achievement of desired outcomes. Delivery plans were now being prepared for all 35 designated

targets to support this. Reference was made to the approval letter received from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government which reinforced the new duty placed on the local authority and all partner authorities to “have regard to” targets within the LAA.

#### **4 LPSA TARGET 7 – INCREASING SAFETY FROM DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Gavin Butler and Judith Gibson provided an overview of the work of the Cheshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (CDAP) and its key achievements to date, including attainment of Target 7 of the Second Generation Local Public Service Agreement.

CDAP was celebrating its tenth year of partnership working, delivering real results through systematic, strategic and operational approaches. It was estimated that only 25% of domestic violence incidents were reported to the Police but many of these were repeat incidents. Despite being an LPSA and LAA target in its own right, domestic violence impacted across a range of other indicators and targets. Concern was expressed that only £42k of the £1.4m total performance reward grant for LPSA Target 7 had been ringfenced for re-investment.

Specific reference was made to the factors considered critical to the success of the partnership and achievement of results. These included:

- the implementation of national best practice;
- an operational hub: i.e. Domestic Abuse Family Safety Units;
- shared targets (LCJB, Children’s Trusts, PSA 23, etc);
- pooled budgets;
- strong leadership;
- operationally proactive and preventive;
- integrated/family interventions; and
- experience and expertise of voluntary/community sector and service users at heart of development.

The increasing demand for services and ongoing need to develop new and sustainable approaches was proving a challenge, particularly against the uncertain backdrop of local government re-organisation, the creation of the two new unitary authorities and the loss of key external funding from Government Office for the North West.

Partners acknowledged the value of the CDAP and the services on offer and expressed their ongoing support for continuation in the future.

#### **5 “COMMUNITIES IN CONTROL: REAL PEOPLE, REAL POWER”**

Kirstie Hercules provided an overview of the new community empowerment White Paper – “Communities in Control: real people, real power”. Written from the perspective of the individual, the White Paper aims to provide people with answers to the following questions:

- How can I be an active citizen?
- How can I find out information in a way I can understand and can use?

- How do I have my say and influence the decisions being made on my behalf, both by elected and appointed people?
- How do I hold to account the people who exercise power in my locality?
- How do I get swift and fair redress when things go wrong and make sure it doesn't happen to someone else?
- How do I stand for office and what support should I get?
- How can my friends, neighbours and I own and run local services ourselves?

It was noted that community empowerment is the responsibility of everyone – local authorities, partners, third sector, individuals, etc. Specific reference was made to the potential funding available to empower the third sector, new duties, new powers, new rules, new initiatives, new strategies, new reviews and new tools to support the empowerment agenda. The White Paper had also been reflected in the new Policing Green Paper. It would need to be taken forward as part of the local government re-organisation work underway and would feature as a key line of enquiry for Comprehensive Area Assessment. The new Community Empowerment Learning and Development Programme developed with funding from the Cheshire & Warrington Improvement and Efficiency Partnership would explore the content and implications of the White Paper in more detail.

In the ensuing discussion, partners welcomed the apparent ongoing commitment to devolution (as opposed to delegation) and supported the general principles of the White Paper, though the ability to deliver was still unknown. Bespoke individualised solutions would be needed as not everybody would want the responsibilities associated with devolution. It would also be interesting to see how local (town and parish) councils could better integrate and work with the new unitary authorities at a grass roots level. Specific reference was made to the new duty to have regard to petitions, something that the community feel is important but is sometimes dismissed by the recipients. The ability of the community to take up any new opportunities for empowerment was raised as a potential issue for the future which could increase polarisation within and across communities.

The importance of ongoing training for both elected Members and partners was also raised, particularly in the context of Comprehensive Area Assessment. The Sustainable Communities Bill already provided opportunities and challenges which, if addressed appropriately could lead to more innovative and exciting future service delivery models.

## **6 COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT – UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS**

Peter Forrester, CAA Lead for Cheshire and Merseyside, alerted partners to the imminent consultation on the new Comprehensive Area Assessment framework. The proposed model would comprise two elements:

- an area assessment commenting on how well partners are achieving outcomes for the area based on local priorities; and

- an individual organisational assessment based on a scorecard approach and commenting on issues such as performance and financial management.

As previously noted, CAA would also explore community engagement and would highlight both good practice and areas for improvement. Information, including interactive maps, would be publicly available via the website.

Ten trial sites had been identified (including Stockport in the North West). Consultation on the revised framework would run from 29 July with the results analysed during October / November. The final framework would be published during January 2009 followed by the publication of final Local Authority reports during February. Initial CAA reports would then be produced from November 2009.

It was noted that evidence to inform the first reports would be collected over a number of months rather than through a one-off inspection event. In Cheshire, this process would be more complicated as a consequence of local government re-organisation though the approach would need to be proportionate to reflect the situation.

Partners continued to express concern about the mutuality of accountability across the partnership in relation to the area assessment and the delivery of outcomes. This would need to be considered in more detail as part of the development of new partnerships frameworks for Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East.

## **7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**AGREED: That the next meeting of the Cheshire Governance Board be held on Friday 3 October 2008.**