

Notes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Strategic Senior Officers' Group (SSOG) held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday 6 September 2006.

PRESENT

John Sinnott – Chief Executive, Leicestershire County Council – in the Chair

Liz Clark – Representing Director of Adult Social Care and Health,
Leicestershire County Council

Jim Connelley – Director Job Centre Plus

Sue Ellerby – Representing the Chief Executive of the PCT

Mike Goodwin – Assistant Chief Constable, Leicestershire Constabulary

Brian Hayes – Chief Executive, Charnwood Borough Council

Heather Munro – Chief Probation Officer (see Minute 14 below)

Neil Lambert – Charnwood CVS

Helen Seth – Representing the Chief executive of the University Hospital of
Leicester (UHL) NHS Trust

Kishor Tailor – Chief Executive of LSEP

David Webb – Chief Fire Officer, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

Gareth Williams – Director of Children and Young People's Service,
Leicestershire County Council

Officers in Support:

Jan Sensier – GOEM

Andy Robinson – Leicestershire County Council, LAA Lead Officer

Roberta Norris – Leicestershire County Council, LAA Project Manager

Mark Wilson, Superintendent, Leicestershire Constabulary

Tom Purnell – Policy Group Manager, Leicestershire County Council (Minutes
16 and 17)

Howard Robinson – Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Minute 22)

Geoff Cave – Committee Officer, Leicestershire County Council

Apologies

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of: Christine Fisher, Catherine Griffiths (Sue Ellerby attended the meeting in her place) and Dr Peter Reading (Helen Seth attended in his place).

13. Notes of the Meeting of SSOG held on 13 June 2006

The notes of the meeting of SSOG held on 13 June 2006, were agreed as a correct record subject to the inclusion of Neil Lambert in the list of persons present and it being noted that Sue Ellerby represented the Charnwood and North West Leicestershire PCT.

14. Membership of the Group – Proposal by the Probation Service

John Sinnott reported that, since the membership of the Group had been agreed at the previous meeting, a request had been received from Heather Munro, Chief Probation Officer, seeking approval of the Group to amend its terms of reference to include representation from the Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Service. Heather Munro had prepared a paper making the case for such representation and this was

circulated at the meeting and a copy marked '4' is filed with these notes. With the agreement of the Group, Heather Munro attended the meeting and spoke on the matter.

It was AGREED that the terms of reference of SSOG be amended to include the Chief Probation Officer in the Membership of the Group.

15. GOEM – Revised Staffing Arrangements

Jan Sensier updated the Group on revised staffing arrangements at GOEM. She reported that Peter Ward would not now be taking over as Area Director for Leicestershire as originally planned and that, in the short term, she would act as Area Director for Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. GOEM was now reconsidering its structures up to 2008 and would make a further announcement in Spring 2007. It was hoped that there would be no diminution of service during this period.

16. Local Area Agreement (LAA) – Progress, Review and Refresh

The Group considered a report by the LAA Lead Officer on a number of matters concerning the LAA (a copy of which marked '6' is filed with these notes) as follows:-

(a) Progress (paras 2-10)

- (i) John Sinnott referred to paragraph 2 in the report and informed the Group that this would be the last meeting which Roberta Norris would be attending. On behalf of the Group, he extended thanks and appreciation to her for the work she had carried out as LAA Project Officer and best wishes to her for the future.
- (ii) Tom Purnell introduced the section of the report on Neighbourhood Management for which the responsibility for putting arrangements in place rested with the District LSPs. He informed the Group that good progress had been made by a number of LSPs in establishing these arrangements as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. A Leicestershire Neighbourhood Management Group had been established to facilitate the co-ordination of Neighbourhood Management activity with the theme-based LAA outcomes. The terms of reference of the Group were contained in Appendix 2 to the report. At the initial meeting of the Group on 16 August a broad consensus had been reached on the distribution of funding. However, Melton LSP had challenged what it saw as an element of unfairness in this regard. The Group was asked to give consideration to Melton's concerns. The Group was also asked to consider what additional funding might need to be made available from partner organisations to support neighbourhood management. In this latter respect:

- Mike Goodwin said the Police wished to be supportive and had already pledged the support of officers across all 18 neighbourhood areas;
- Brian Hayes said this issue could be raised at the meeting of DLSP Chairs on 11 September.

(iii) The Group noted the final arrangements for funding the non-reward targets set out in Appendix 3.

(b) The Review (paragraphs 12-18)

Roberta Norris outlined the proposed arrangements for the six-monthly review of performance management of the LAA (as explained in the letter from Jan Sensier of GOEM attached as Appendix 4 to the report). There would be block by block meetings during late October/early November and a full strategic level review with GOEM on Monday 20 November 2006 (from 11.00 am– 1.00 pm with a working lunch). The Group agreed to these arrangements and supported GOEM's suggestion that emda and the Audit Commission be invited to attend the meeting on 20 November. In this regard, John Sinnott indicated he would discuss this with Nigel Toms, Audit Commission Relationship Manager for the County Council and some of the District Councils. Members of the Group were asked to inform John Sinnott and Andy Robinson of their availability for attending on 20 November.

(c) The Refresh (paragraphs 19-24)

Roberta Norris drew attention to the Government's deadline of 19 January 2007 for revisions to the LAA for 2007/08 and the deadline of the end of September 2006 for enabling resources to be identified. These deadlines were very tight and representations were being made through GOEM for them to be extended. Jan Sensier updated the Group on developments as follows:-

- New guidance had that day been issued by the Department of Work and Pensions in respect of allowing more flexibility to Job Centre Plus District Managers in respect of secondment of staff to other agencies and this would assist in the appropriate enabling measure under the LAA;
- No further progress had been made on the direct payment issue;
- It was disappointing that the Government have brought forward the date for the refresh to 19 January and GOEM would inform Government Departments accordingly.
- It was hoped to be possible to re-negotiate the end of September date for enabling measures and partners were requested to e-mail GOEM with details of any new measures.

It was agreed that John Sinnott would write on behalf of the Group to Jane Todd at GOEM expressing concerns regarding these deadlines which she would then forward to the Government Departments concerned in London.

(d) Exit Costs (paragraphs 25 and 26)

Andy Robinson introduced the report of the Working Group that had been established at the previous meeting to consider exit and unexpected costs and to establish a protocol for treating these within the LAA. The Working Group's report was attached as Appendix 5. SSOG agreed the Working Group's recommendations.

It was AGREED:-

- (i) That the report on progress in implementing the LAA be noted;
- (ii) That an update report be made to the next meeting of the Group regarding funding to support the neighbourhood management arrangements;
- (iii) That the arrangements for the six-monthly review of the LAA, including the holding of a formal strategic level review on 20 November (from 11am-2pm with a working lunch), be agreed;
- (iv) That GOEM be asked to press for reconsideration of the timing of both the refresh overall and the deadline for requests for enabling measures and that GOEM also be requested to press for a determination of the outstanding enabling requests as soon as possible;
- (v) That the proposed arrangements for the refresh of the LAA be agreed and concern be expressed to GOEM regarding the introduction of additional mandatory outcomes and indicators.
- (vi) That the programme for the Leicestershire Together Conference on 30 October (attached as Appendix 6), which would inform the refresh process, be noted;
- (vii) That the recommendations of the Working Group established to consider exit and unexpected costs of the LAA, set out in paragraphs 19-21 of Appendix 5, be approved.

17. Housing in Leicestershire

Tom Purnell introduced a report by Leicestershire County Council seeking consideration, in the light of recent Government guidance and other developments, of the need for Leicestershire Together to develop a strategic approach to housing issues in Leicestershire. A copy of the report marked '7' is filed with these notes.

It was proposed to establish a small time-limited Task Group to consider the arrangements which would need to be established in Leicestershire. SSOG supported this approach and agreed that the Task Group be led by a District Council representative. Brian Hayes stated he would discuss this with his District Council colleagues with a view to the Task Group's discussions being based on an extension of the actions already being carried out.

It was AGREED that the approach to housing issues in the LAA, as outlined in the report and set out above, be approved.

18. Invest to Save Budget Bidding Opportunity

Andy Robinson introduced a report by Leicestershire County Council alerting the Group to the opportunity to bid for the latest round of the Invest to Save Budget and seeking agreement to a process for selecting bids. A copy of the report marked '8' is filed with these notes.

Agencies and partnerships were requested to submit outline proposals to Andy Robinson by 17 September. Mike Goodwin considered it would be possible to develop a bid in relation to community safety issues and he would contact Andy Robinson direct. It was acknowledged that Phil Hawkins and Sheila Rochester may also be need to be involved in this work. In response to a comment by Kishor Tailor, Jan Sensier agreed to provide Andy Robinson with examples of successful bids from other authorities.

It was AGREED that the process for preparing bids for Invest to Save, as set out in the report, be supported and agencies and partnerships be requested to consider and bring forward relevant proposals to the next meeting of SSOG.

19. 'A Stronger Local Voice' – Department of Health Consultation Document

Liz Clark introduced a report by Leicestershire County Council seeking the comments of the Group on the County Council's proposed response to the Department of Health's document 'A Stronger Local Voice'; a copy of which marked '9' is filed with these notes.

The County Council's response was set out in paragraph 5 of the report and it was proposed that this would be submitted to accord with the Department of Health's deadline of 7 September. Sue Ellerby reported that a similar response had been forwarded by the PCTs which also referred to the issues of the need for a smooth transition and social enterprise models. The Group agreed that these additional comments should be submitted as a further response to the consultation paper.

It was AGREED that the County Council's comments on the consultation document 'A Stronger Local Voice' be noted and additional comments now be submitted as set out above.

20. Links with the Regional Assembly Policy Board

Andy Robinson introduced a report by Leicestershire County Council advising of the proposals by the Policy Board of the East Midlands Regional Assembly to develop stronger links with County and unitary LSPs. A copy of the report marked '10' is filed with these notes. The Group was informed that the Policy Board, at its meeting on 1 September, had agreed the way forward outlined in section 4 of the appendix to the report.

It was AGREED that the proposals set out in the report be welcomed in principle and that discussions be held with officers of the East Midlands Regional Assembly regarding the detail of their implementation.

21. Public Services Sector Compact – Terms of Reference

Howard Robinson (in his capacity as current Chairman of the Leicestershire Public Services Compact Steering Group) introduced a report of the Steering Group seeking support for the establishment of the Leicestershire Public Services Sector Compact. A copy of the report marked '11' is filed with these notes.

Howard Robinson outlined the background to the development of the Compact (which was supported and funded through the Learning and Skills Council) which aimed to bring together public service sector employers in Leicestershire and Leicester City to develop a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experience in the field of human resources, staff training and learning and development. A Steering Group had been established to shape the operation of the Compact and it had set up two thematic working groups.

The following main points were raised during the discussion of this item:

- Care must be taken to ensure that the Compact does not duplicate work done elsewhere, for example through the LRIP (Leicestershire and Rutland Improvement Partnership).
- A number of members of the Group commented that they were not previously aware of the development of the Compact despite the wide representation of organisations on the Working Group.
- Particular support for the Compact was expressed by representatives of the Police, Fire and rescue Service and Job Centre Plus.
- Consideration should be given to involving the voluntary and community sector at an earlier stage.
- There could be specific opportunities to link the Compact with the four strands of the LAA and with an Invest to Save bid.
- The project could help to assist with the problems of worklessness locally.
- SSOG could suggest other ideas in the future which the Steering Group and its Working Groups might consider in order to share best practice.

- It was felt that the inclusion of a District Council representative on the Steering Group would be beneficial and, in this regard, Brian Hayes suggested that Steve Atkinson (Chief Executive of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council) be approached.

It was AGREED:

- (i) That the creation of the Leicestershire Public Services Sector Compact be supported in principle and its proposed terms of reference be approved;
- (ii) That further reports from the Steering Group on the progress being made by the Compact be submitted to meetings of SSOG.

22. Dates of Next Meetings of SSOG

It was NOTED that, as previously agreed, the next meeting would be held on Thursday 19 October at 2.00pm and, as agreed under minute 16 (iii) above, the subsequent meeting would be held on Monday 20 November from 11.00am – 2.00pm and would form part of the formal strategic level review of the LAA.

2.00pm – 3.30pm
6/9/06