

Sandwell Partnership

Notes of a Meeting of the Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum

12th November, 2009 at 9.30 a.m.

**In the Warwick Room, Business Centre 2, Carters Green Business Centre,
371 High Street, West Bromwich**

Present:

Councillor Simon Hackett (Chair) (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council [MBC]);
Ally Allerson (Greets Green Partnership – Executive Director);
June Beddows (Sandwell Private Landlord Forum - Business Advisor);
Dr Derrick Campbell (Race Equality Sandwell – Chief Executive);
Peter John (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Director of Partnerships and Housing);
Jan MacMillan (Sandwell Community Involvement & Participation Services [SCIPS] - Company Secretary);
Neeraj Malhotra (Sandwell Primary Care Trust - Public Health Specialist);
Kim Mocroft (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Economic Regeneration & Skills Division – Community Development Unit);
Brian Oakley (Sandwell Homes – Chief Executive);
John Selway (Sandwell Private Landlord Forum – Member).

Apologies:

Dr Chris Handy (Vice-Chair) (Accord Housing Association – Chief Executive);
Gary Bowman (Sandwell Partnership – Partnership Director);
Jan Britton (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Executive Director);
Alan Dean (Sandwell MBC - Adult & Community Services – Head of Health & Well Being);
Tonia Flannagan (Voluntary Community Sector Representative);
Dominic Harman (Persimmon Homes (West Midlands) - Managing Director);

Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum
12th November, 2009

Peter Holtham (Black Country Connexions – Connexions Commissioning Manager for Sandwell);
Paul Jones (Riverside Homes – Assistant Director);
Adnan Saif (Urban Living – Chief Executive);
Andrea Pope-Smith (Sandwell MBC - Executive Director Adult & Community Services).

Sara Woodall (Accord Housing Association – Chair of Community Regeneration Thematic Group);
Paul Haden (Sandwell MBC – Corporate Services - Partnering & Improvement Division - Thematic Liaison Manager);
Kirsten Casey (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Partnerships and Housing Directorate - Housing Partnerships Manager);
Laura Coburn (Sandwell MBC - Corporate Services - Partnerships and Housing Division - Assistant Partnerships Officer).

In attendance: Nicola Sinclair (Sandwell MBC – Urban Regeneration - Partnerships and Housing Directorate – Principal Research Officer) Chair Research and Demographic Change Thematic Sub-Group;
Steve Smith (Sandwell MBC – Corporate Services - Partnering & Improvement Division - Service Manager, Partnering & Improvement);
Kate Jenkins (Sandwell MBC – Corporate Services - Partnering & Improvement Division - Thematic Liaison Manager);
Kate Walker (Sandwell MBC - Corporate Services – Strategy & Communications Unit – Senior Press and Public Relations Officer).

Officer Support: Maureen Christian (Sandwell MBC - Corporate Services - Partnerships and Housing Division - Partnerships Officer);
Nick Laws (Sandwell MBC, - Corporate Services - Partnerships and Housing Division – Commissioning & Performance Manager);
Dawn Reeves (Director, Inspira Consulting – West Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership).

Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum
12th November, 2009

40/09

Death of Chris Downes

The Chair informed the Executive Board of the sad death of Chris Downes.

Chris was the Strategy and Research Manager in the Partnerships and Housing Directorate and as Chair of the Executive Board's Research and Demographic Change Thematic Sub-Group has contributed significantly to the work of the Board. Chris died on 9th November after a short illness and would be missed by his many friends and colleagues.

The Executive Board stood in silent tribute to his memory.

41/09

Presentation from Greets Green Partnership on What it Can Bring to the Delivery of the Strategy

The Executive Board heard a presentation from A Allerson Executive Director of the Greets Green Partnership on what the Partnership had brought to the delivery of the Sandwell Housing Strategy. She reported that the programme was launched in 1998 as the pathfinder programme for the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. It brought together investment in buildings and people and aimed to improve neighbourhood management and the delivery of local services.

The main aims of the programme in Greets Green were to:-

- * improve job prospects
- * improve health
- * improve educational attainment
- * reduce crime and the fear of crime, by Community Leadership

The Programme which would expire on 31st March, 2010 had been subject to an annual performance management Assessment, using the Business Excellence Model, overseen by Audit Commission, the Audit Commission Review of NDCs and by Select Committee Review. The findings of these evaluations showed that positive impacts had been made on improving the quality of "place" outcomes, but that "people based" outcomes had been slower to improve but were now moving in the right direction.

Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum
12th November, 2009

Key achievements had been:-

- * improving educational attainment in 5 primaries/ secondary schools;
- * improving access to primary care – GPs/ Nurses;
- * improving the choice/ mix/ condition of the housing stock;
- * getting people into jobs;
- * 68% of residents think that the area has improved;
- * 4 sites cleared and ready for redevelopment;
- * 85% of Council housing brought up to ‘decent homes’ standards;
- * improved range of homes and tenures in the area;
- * support given across all tenures to improve existing stock;
- * new ways of working developed with partners;
- * emphasis on environmental improvements
- * securing “pledges” from partner agencies to continue the delivery of the programme beyond 2010 and to continue working with local people in doing so.

A community based partnership “Greets Green Enterprises” had been established to maintain the involvement of local people post March, 2010 so that the voice of Greets Green people would continue to be heard.

42/09

Outcomes from the Executive Board Workshop held on 10th September, 2009

The Executive Board received a presentation from Dawn Reeves, Director, Inspira Consulting, West Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership on the outcomes of the Workshop held on 10th September. The Workshop had aimed to:-

- * increase the levels of joint collaboration and action to deliver the Thematic Plan;
- * stimulate creative thinking, develop new solutions and positive behaviours to operate more effectively to deliver shared targets and would think through the implications of this, to clarify roles and contributions to the partnerships work, what would be done and what needed to influence others to do.
- * to help to join up the vision, look at the cross-cutting issues and the roles of Theme Sub Groups to add value across the partnership, to enable Board members to explore geographical focus and how they could maximise impact.

Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum
12th November, 2009

At the Workshop the Executive Board had been asked to look at:-

- * the Top 3 things the partnership needed to clarify/action;
- * how and where Executive Board members could contribute best;
- * what is happening now;
- * what we could do, if we get our act together;
- * what might we do, if we pulled out all the stops.

The following “Top 3 things” were identified:-

- * to clarify ownership & accountability to the partnership;
- * to empower Thematic Sub Groups to get on with the work – and them having the right people to deliver;
- * the Executive Board needed to focus on action and removing blockages to delivery.

The Executive Board considered what this might mean in practice for the Executive Board and identified that:-

- * the Executive Board should actively challenge, support and identify barriers. Should action log activities focusing more on performance;
- * to get the right people from the right partners with the right skills in the right place would mean that the Executive Board would have to be slimmed down;
- * Thematic Sub Groups should be empowered to get on with their work and consideration should also be given as to whether they also have right people from the right partners with the right skills in the right place to be able to get on and deliver the Action Plan;
- * the Chairs of the Thematic Sub Groups should own their groups’ delivery plans, manage their agendas and report back to the Executive Board.

Board members also felt that more should be done to:-

- * get the wider Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum to set the scope and scenarios within which the Executive Board should work;
- * raise awareness of why the Executive Board was here, what it aimed to achieve, its priorities and what it had done;

Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum
12th November, 2009

- * understand the impact of initiatives from a partnership perspective (and potential constraints/ savings and impact on outcomes);
- * focus upon Strategic Housing Issues – influence/ decisions - The Chair of the Executive Board and the Chairs of Thematic Sub Groups to work on influencing strategy - Need to be clear about where we focus and who else we need to influence on what.

It was Agreed that the Director of Partnerships and Housing SMBC should consider the outcomes of the Workshop based on the discussions of the Executive Board today and come back to the next meeting of the Board with proposal for the future structure of the Executive Board and its Thematic Sub Groups.

43/09

Feed-back from Local Strategic Partnership Board on the New LSP Priority Areas

The Director of Partnerships and Housing and the Partnership Director, Sandwell Partnership submitted the revised Priority Areas of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Work had begun to revise the Partnership Thematic Business Plan and Action Plan both of which had been recently assessed by the LSP. The Commissioning & Performance Manager SMBC would also be meeting with the Chairs of the Thematic Sub Groups to “flesh out” what “to successfully deliver our Housing Strategy” actually means.

He also stated that he would be preparing an Draft Annual Report and he asked Board members to contact him direct, with any particular outcomes, achievements or awards that they were aware of.

44/09

Feedback from Chairs of Thematic Groups on Progress against Delivery Plan Actions

Nicola Sinclair, Principal Research Officer SMBC (Chair of the Research and Demographic Change Thematic Sub Group) and Neeraj Malhotra, Public Health Specialist Sandwell Primary Care Trust (Chair of the Housing and Health Thematic Sub Group) attended the Executive Board and outlined progress within their Thematic Sub Group.

Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum
12th November, 2009

The Chairs of the Community Regeneration and Housing Development and Regeneration Thematic Sub Groups had had to submit their apologies for the meeting.

45/09

Revised Health and Housing Strategy

Neeraj Malhotra, Public Health Specialist Sandwell Primary Care Trust (Chair of the Housing and Health Thematic Sub Group) reported that the Revised Health and Housing Strategy had been presented to PCT Directors on 10th September, 2009.

The Strategy identified the following gaps in service delivery across a range of partners:-

- * lack of co-ordination between housing, social care and health practitioners;
- * lack of systematic identification and resolution of housing issues;
- * lack of referrals from frontline health practitioners;
- * demand led services are not necessarily reaching those most in need.

Which could be addressed by:-

- * better co-ordination between housing, health and social care;
- * systematic identification of non-decent housing amongst people with long term conditions;
- * training of practitioners who go into people's homes;
- * easy referral methods;
- * integrated teams;
- * proactive, targeted services;

All of which highlighted the need for greater collaboration on hospital discharge policy, Telecare/ telehealth and aids and adaptations. Resulting in systematic identification of health, housing and social care needs and better outcome measures.

The Housing and Health Thematic Sub Group asked the Executive Board to:-

- * accept the findings of the Housing and Health Strategy, especially to acknowledge that investments in housing can bring savings to the NHS and to social care;

Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum
12th November, 2009

- * accept a joint commissioning approach to housing and health related services and to provide input on how best to progress this;
- * identify someone from the Board to have input into the development of the business case.

It was reported that at their meeting, PCT Directors had agreed in principle that investments in housing should be considered where they could be linked to improvements in health outcomes and where possible, they could result in savings to the NHS and social care. They had asked that a paper be brought to the PCT Commissioning Board setting out a “business case” for a range of housing and health related investments, describing the benefits and outcomes as a result of those investments.

The Executive Board fully supported the findings, strategic objectives and proposed actions contained in the Revised Health and Housing Strategy and welcomed particularly the joint training proposals but felt that the inability to pay for fuel, particularly amongst those who didn't have a bank account, and those who used slot meters and payment schemes was an issue which had not “yet” been considered by the Revised Strategy.

46/09 **Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy**

This item was deleted from the agenda.

47/09 **Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum - Annual Conference**

The Executive Board was reminded that the Third Annual Conference would take place on Friday 27th November, 2009 at the West Bromwich Albion Football Club, the Hawthorns, West Bromwich, West Midlands.

48/09 **“Risk Management” Implications From Today’s Meeting**

Potential risk identified today:-

- * additional homes;
- * decency in the private sector;
- * funding regime.

Executive Board of the Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum
12th November, 2009

49/09

Dates of Future Meetings

It was agreed that meetings would be held at 9.30 a.m. on Thursdays:-

14th January, 2010

at Urban Living, 4th Floor, Hawthorns House, Halfords Lane, West Bromwich;

4th March, 2010

Conference Room 1, Development House, West Bromwich.

(Meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.)

*Contact Officer: Richard. M. Ebanks
Democratic Services Unit
0121 569 3190*