

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Thursday 26th January 2006

at 3.00 pm

in Committee Room B

*** PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TIME***

MEMBERS: REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Cook, Coward, Fleet, Hargreaves, Iseley, Johnson, Kaiser, London,
A Marshall, Rayner and Wright

Resident Representatives:

James Atkinson, Mary Power and Iris Ryder

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2005 (*attached*)

4. ISSUES RAISED AT NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

No items

**5. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE
COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items

6. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

No items

7. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

No items

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The Role of Tees Valley Regeneration (TVR) – *Project Director TVR* (Presentation)
- 8.2 The Role of Government Office in Local Area Agreements – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
- 8.3 The Role of the Local Authority in Local Area Agreements – *Director of Regeneration* (Presentation)
- 8.4 The Role of the Voluntary/Community Sector (VCS) in Hartlepool's Local Area Agreements – *Community Network*

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting Friday 3rd February, commencing at 2.30 pm in Committee Room B**

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM MINUTES

8th December 2005

Present:

Councillor: Pamela Hargreaves (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob Cook, John Coward, Frances London, Ann Marshall

Also Present by invitation:

Councillors Arthur Preece and Dennis Waller.

Resident Representatives:

James Atkinson

Officers: Peter Scott, Director of Regeneration and Planning Services
Joanne Smithson, Head of Community Strategy
Sajda Banaras, Scrutiny Support Officer
Rebecca Redman, Research Assistant - Scrutiny
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Also Present:

John Lowther, Director Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit
Jim Johnsone, Director of Tees Valley Living

20. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from resident representatives Iris Ryder and Mary Power. Apologies were also received from The Mayor, Stuart Drummond and Councillor Robbie Payne, Culture, Housing and Transportation Portfolio Holder who were invited to this meeting.

21. Declarations of Interest by Members

None.

22. Minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2005

Confirmed.

23. Issues Raised at Neighbourhood Forums

None.

24. Sub-Regional Partnerships (*Director, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit and Director of Tees Valley Living*)

The Director of Regeneration and Planning Services outlined the progress made so far in this inquiry examining partnership working arrangements of the Council. The Director of the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (TVJSU) and Director of Tees Valley Living (TVL) attended to inform Members how their respective organisations operated and what funding arrangements were in place.

Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit and Committee (TVJSC/U)

The Director of the TVJSU indicated that the JSU was set up in 1996 as a joint arrangement across the Tees Valley Boroughs. The functions of the JSU were detailed in the report including functions recently added following a review of the JSU. There were a number of client groups made up of officers from across the five authorities that influenced the work of the JSU. Reports produced by the client groups would then be submitted to the Joint Strategy Committee (JSC). This Committee consisted of 25 Members, five from each authority.

Tees Valley Partnership (TVP)

The TVP operated under the governance arrangements of One North East. The role of the TVP was detailed in the report with the key issue being to ensure One North East funding and guidance was utilised to ensure the needs of all Boroughs across the Tees Valley were met. The Partnership has a board which consisted of representatives from various bodies including the five local authorities, Health Authority, voluntary sector and Cleveland Police. An Executive of all the partners involved meets every three weeks and has drawn up a three-year programme which was approved by the Board for submission to One North East.

The Director of the TVP submitted documents that detailed the funding across 2002 to 2006 for projects within Hartlepool.

A discussion followed where the following issues were raised:

Where was funding for tourism included? The Director of the TVJSU indicated that funding for tourism was included within the Coastal Arc funding.

What were Hi-Tech Incubators? The Director of Regeneration and Planning Services advised that these incubators were a range of business units to help new and emerging business units on Queens Meadow and Brougham Enterprise Centre.

How can Members help the TVP to ensure Hartlepool receives a fair-share of funding? The Director of the TVJSU indicated that Members could help through representing Hartlepool and applying the appropriate pressure. It was emphasised that it was imperative to produce a clear programme of projects in order to negotiate for Government resources.

What support was provided to representatives on the TVP and JSU/C? The JSC was supported through officers within each of the Boroughs as well as through the Director of the TVJSU whilst the TVP relied on support from individual sectors.

How can the representation of the Local Strategic Partnership be reinforced? Future arrangements may include boards created underneath the main Partnership Board in order that local issues, ie economic development and transport can be dealt with at a local level. This may require a Co-ordination Board to be created and discussions were in the early stages with One North East.

Was the allocation of funding across the regional and local level done fairly? The Director of the TVJSU indicated that there were some regional projects that would be funded prior to the local level funding being allocated, ie funding for the chemical industry. Government policy currently operated in silos for example the Highways Agency.

Tees Valley Living

The Director of Tees Valley Living indicated that the key issue was building sustainable communities and bringing centres of towns back to life. TVL was currently in a transitional stage whilst undergoing restructuring. A TVL Board and Executive Group had been created to create an evidence-based strategy and included representatives from the 5 authorities across the Tees Valley as well as regional social landlords and the private sector and was overseen by Government Office North East and English Partnerships. A budget of £800k was allocated over 2 years to create a campaign. Approximately £23m of special funding had been secured from Central Government for the Tees Valley over two years and in addition a bid had been placed for £20m with the

Regional Housing Board. The aim of TVL was to ensure areas were self-sustaining and places people wanted to live.

A discussion followed where the following issues were raised.

How was the funding utilised in Hartlepool? A 15-year strategy was in place and included the New Deal for Communities area and North Central Hartlepool. A baseline study had been carried out which identified that there was a lot of activity being undertaken under housing market renewal.

Lots of other bodies had already looked at governance arrangements, could this information be utilised instead of using the information provided by the consultants? The report provided by the consultants was an excellent report containing a lot of useful information which was being implemented. However, any extra information would be utilised if it was felt appropriate.

Concern was expressed that one or two people were the same representatives on a range of sub-regional bodies on behalf of the Council, did they really have the time to deliver effective representation? The Director of TVL indicated that the initial invitations for membership of the TVL Board had been sent to the leaders/mayors with a view that they would either attend or nominate a representative.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive of the Tees Valley Partnership and the Director of Tees Valley Living for their presentation and input into the meeting and advised them that they had a standing invitation to attend this meeting if they felt it would be of benefit.

Decision

The presentations and discussions would be used to inform the Forum's inquiry.

25. Membership on Joint Strategy Committee

Various Members were invited to this meeting to clarify their roles and responsibilities with regard to being Hartlepool Council's representatives on the above Committee. Two Members attended and provided the following information. They were nominated to be Hartlepool Council's representatives by their respective political groups which was then ratified by Council. Both Members indicated that they attended all meetings. Although they indicated that information was fed back through their political groups on an ad-hoc basis, however there was no formal process for this set up.

Before every Joint Strategy Committee (JSC), a briefing meeting would take

place between the appropriate Members and the Director of Regeneration and Planning Services. This would ensure that Members were fully aware of any implications with the issues to be raised at the Committee.

There was currently no effective mechanism for feeding back information to Members. It was suggested by the Chair to Members present if it would be useful to have some formalisation of that process of feeding back information to all Members. They both indicated that they thought it would be a good idea.

Decision

- i) Members were thanked for their useful input into this inquiry.
- ii) To consider further a mechanism via which Members serving on sub-regional partnerships can report back to Council.

PAMELA HARGREAVES

CHAIRMAN

REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM REPORT

26th January 2006



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN LOCAL
AREA AGREEMENTS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with a background into the Government Office's (GO) role in the Local Area Agreement process (LAA).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members of the regional GO, Government Office North East (GONE), are unable to attend this meeting because they are in the process of co-ordinating the next phase of LAAs. Consequently, they have sent the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's *Local Area Agreement Guidance*. From which the contents of this paper are based.

- 2.2 The ODPM guidance states that:

Government Offices will represent the Government in the LAA discussions. GOs will already have had discussions with those areas selected to take part in the second phase of LAAs, and will have arranged or will shortly be arranging meetings with areas to discuss in more detail the process and answer any questions local areas have.

- 2.3 And that:

The GOs will also be responsible for the performance management and monitoring, including financial monitoring of the agreement once it has been signed, and will feed back as necessary to central departments. They will also have a role providing support to local areas during the lifetime of the agreement. The role of the GO is covered in more detail in the LAA toolkit.

- 2.4 The ODPM Guidance also states that:

There should be a continuing dialogue between the local area and the GO after the agreement of the LAA as partners in seeking to deliver the

agreed outcomes and targets. The level and nature of this dialogue should be tailored towards the individual circumstances of the local area. There are already mechanisms in place between the GO and the local area for performance monitoring and management of a number of outcomes and targets, for example for crime information through iQuanta. The performance monitoring and management relationship between the local area and the GO for the LAA should take account of these mechanisms. As real-time access to performance information evolves in other areas the monitoring of LAAs should also evolve to take account of this.

- 2.5 The LAA toolkit indicates that Local Authorities (LAs) and GOs have a unique role in the LAAs, with the LA acting as the overall accountable body and the GO as the lead for negotiation on behalf of the Government. Consequently, the GO acts as a 'go-between' for localities and central government in the LAA process. The GOs also have a role in ensuring necessary performance information is shared in a co-ordinated way to avoid confusion and duplication in reporting mechanisms.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Area Agreement Guidance – ODPM 2005

Local Area Agreement Toolkit – ODPM 2005

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REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM REPORT

26th January 2006



Report of: Hartlepool Community Network

Subject: THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY
SECTOR (VCS) AND THE HARTLEPOOL
LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline the role and views of the VCS in relation to Hartlepool's Local Area Agreement (LAA) process.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The report contains an overview of the VCS's role in the LAA process and a series of recommendations in relation to this process.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members note, and discuss, the contents of the report.

THE VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY SECTOR AND THE HARTLEPOOL LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

1. ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS) IN HARTLEPOOL

The Hartlepool VCS comprises the following:

- 550 groups in total.
- 5000 volunteers.
- 50 groups with paid staff.
- 400 people in paid employment.

Most of Hartlepool's population will benefit from the services of at least one group in any one year.

All of the above is based on actual numbers. The number of volunteers is an estimate based on 2001 research undertaken by HVDA of 86 groups who had over 2000 volunteers, 5000 was a reasonable estimate for the 400 groups on HVDA's database at that time.

RECOMMENDATION

Describe the VCS role in the LAA.

2. COMMUNITY COHESION

The Hartlepool Voluntary/Community Sector plays a substantial role in enabling community cohesion. This needs to be recognised, especially in regards of its ability to serve the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded in society. This is achieved by people working together from different communities e.g. different ages, BME communities etc. Cohesion is also built by volunteering which:

- Builds good neighbourliness.
- Builds up confidence and self esteem.
- Enhances skills and provides a route to training, career development and employment.
- Communities benefit through the services and activities undertaken.

3. ENGAGEMENT

The Community Network is an established mechanism to engage the VCS. This is achieved through a variety of mechanisms:

- Representation on partnerships.
- Initiating and presenting research of the VCS and its role.
- The VCS is a deliver of service and as such is a source of expertise.

- Involvement in working groups and attendance at consultation meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

To describe the VCS role in the engagement process.

4. **COMPACT**

The Compact is a framework established by Government, which asks public sector bodies to agree individual frameworks defining how they intend to work with the VCS. The Government is seeking to strengthen the Compact through an initiative known as Compact Plus, which will establish a kitemark for best practice.

In Hartlepool such an agreement was developed with the Council and endorsed by the Council's Cabinet in January 2003. The Hartlepool Compact covers issues such as communication, funding, representation and contracting.

The document sets out a number of actions on each side including a three-year action plan. To date the Compact has not been reviewed.

RECOMMENDATION

The Compact should be reviewed and consideration be given to adopting the Compact Plus and securing the necessary kitemark.

5. **ENGAGING WITH DIFFICULT TO REACH GROUPS**

The VCS is very good at engaging with what are termed difficult to reach groups.

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|--------------------------------|---|
| (i) Young People | A report produced by the Community Network highlighted how young people could be involved in decision making. A Youth Council is a specific recommendation of the Report. |
| (ii) People with Disabilities | The All Ability Forum works well but runs out of funding in 2006. |
| (iii) Older People | The 50+ Forum works well but it's funding is insecure. |
| (iv) The Gay/Lesbian Community | Hart Gables is a local group, which is actively involved in local decision-making. |

RECOMMENDATION

If we want genuinely independent structures, which empower local people there is a need to support the following:

- 50+ Forum.
- The All Ability Forum.
- To work with Hart Gables.
- To develop a Youth Council.
- To have a meaningful structure to illicit the views of the BME communities.

6. VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY SECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Local Area Agreements (LAA) guidance highlights the importance of the support provided by VCS infrastructure organisations such as Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency. HVDA has been able to provide the following support: (figures are for 2004/05).

- Advice and information on a wide range of topics. (220 groups).
- Recruit volunteers and provide guidance on how to recruit and deploy volunteers. (649 volunteers interviewed).
- Funding support. (£640k distributed to local groups).
- Legal/financial advice and other technical support.
- Provide the role and voice of the VCS.

RECOMMENDATION

There is not enough understanding at a strategic level of why voluntary sector infrastructure support is important to the VCS. There is a need for partners to support HVDA in relation to the above role.

7. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The VCS need to be involved in this process, sometimes the VCS has been involved in specific reviews e.g. Social Services inspections.

RECOMMENDATION

Actively involve the VCS in such reviews and assessments.

8. LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Only a limited number of VCS groups were invited to be involved in this process.

RECOMMENDATION

Wider VCS involvement is required.

9. CONTRACTING

The VCS can in some case be more effective at delivering public services, this can arise for a number of reasons:

- The ability to lever in additional funds, HBC identified that for each £1 invested in the 25 groups supported by the Community Pool in 2003/04, resulted in a further £8 being accessed from other sources.
- Motivate volunteer involvement, in a study of the Hartlepool VCS in 2001, of those groups with paid staff for each 1 full time paid staff member, there were the equivalent of 8 full time volunteers.
- Flexibility of response, local groups are usually quick to respond to need.

RECOMMENDATION

Consideration needs to be given to full cost recovery when contracting with the VCS as recommended by Government in the Home Office/OGC guidance “Think Smart, Think Voluntary Sector” by HBC. The Council’s contacting policy should be reviewed against the above report. When undertaking Best Value Reviews and Budget Reviews the VCS should be considered as a potential provision of service.

10. INVOLVEMENT IN LAA DECISION MAKING

It is not clear at present how decision-making concerning overall co-ordination of the LAA will be made. VCS involvement with the Hartlepool Partnership has generally been good, which should carry through into any LAA decision-making structure.

RECOMMENDATION

The VCS should have meaningful representation on any co-ordinating group. This should not be less than 25% of the membership of any co-ordinating group.

11. KEY CHALLENGES FACING THE HARTLEPOOL VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY SECTORS

- (i) Decline of funding.
- (ii) Real and meaningful involvement in decision-making.
- (iii) Opportunities to bid for services/contracts.

These have been identified through the HBC/Voluntary Sector Compact and HBC’s recent Strengthening Communities Best Value Review. No action plan is yet in place from the Best Value Review.

RECOMMENDATION

To progress the recommendations from the Strengthening Communities Best Value Review and the Compact where such recommendations are still relevant.