



To
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

17th February, 2010

Subject
Scrutiny of Coventry Partnership - Final Report

1 Purpose of the Note

1.1 To summarise the Committee's work on this issue and to identify relevant recommendations for the Committee to consider.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to consider the following recommendations:-

2.1.1 That the Coventry Partnership:-

- a) be recommended to consider taking action as follows:-
 - ii) **Communications** – strengthening its communications arrangements (for example by producing articles for the Council's Insight/Citivision magazines and identifying target audiences more clearly) in order to raise public awareness of its role and achievements.
 - iii) **Managing and evaluating performance** – continuing the work already started in this area, given the importance of managing and evaluating initiatives centrally in order to identify the Partnership's achievements, share good practice identify areas for improvement.
 - iii) **Funding arrangements** – making further efforts to obtain outside and longer term funding for its work.
 - iv) **Adapting to change** – continuing to ensure that its structures and decision-making processes are sufficiently flexible to react quickly in a changing environment.
- b) be asked to inform the Committee whether or not it accepts these recommendations and, if so, to report on progress in 6 months' time.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 At the Committee's meeting on 22nd July, 2009, it discussed how it wished to progress its scrutiny of the Coventry Partnership. The review was established to understand how the Partnership is contributing effectively to the overall objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement, thereby improving the quality of life for people in Coventry. The Committee identified the reasons for carrying out this piece of work as the need ensure that the work of the Partnership adds value to the delivery of public services in Coventry and contributes to improved outcomes for the people of Coventry. The Committee also recognised that working through partnership could result in efficiency savings.
- 3.2 The Committee decided to consider first of all the work of the Partnership Theme Groups and then to examine the role of the Partnership itself.

4 Discussion with Theme Groups

- 4.1 The Committee therefore decided to consider the work of the following four Theme Groups (with the remaining five to be scrutinised in 2010/2011):-
- Community Safety
 - Cultural Partnership
 - Economy, Learning, Skills and Employment
 - Equalities and Community Cohesion.

It further decided to do this by asking the relevant Scrutiny Boards to discuss a standard set of questions with each of those Groups, to try to ensure consistency of approach.

- 4.2 The questions related to:
- Current objectives and priorities
 - Resources and support
 - Key achievements (including how working in partnership had made a difference and added value)
 - Key challenges (including whether there were any barriers to achieving objectives and whether any help, resources or different ways of working would help objectives to be achieved more effectively).
- 4.3 The main findings of the discussions are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

5 Discussion with the Chair of the Coventry Partnership

- 5.1 The Committee received these findings and then went on to consider the role of the Partnership as a whole, identifying a series of questions to which the Chair of the Partnership was asked to respond. The Chair and the Partnership Manager attended the Committee's meeting on 20th January, 2010, to present these responses. The questions and responses are set out in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 5.2 In addition to these questions, the Committee raised further points at the meeting relating to:-
- Communications
 - Outcomes of the Partnership's work
 - Funding arrangements
 - Performance management

- The ability of the Partnership to deal with changing circumstances
- Data management

6 Main Findings

6.1 In the main, the Committee were satisfied with the responses provided to its questions. However, it identified some issues which it considered required further attention by the Partnership. These are as follows:-

- a) **Communications** - The Committee found that the rather complex Partnership structure meant that it was difficult for the public to understand its role and also made it hard for details of all its activities work to be pulled together centrally. Information was made available on the Partnership website, a quarterly bulletin was produced and some publicity was carried out by the Partnership's members separately. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged by the Partnership Manager that more could be done. The Committee accepted that some publicity was better carried out by the relevant organisation. It considered that, whilst not every activity needed to be shown as being Partnership work, those which made a real difference or which would not have happened without Partnership involvement, should be identified as such.
- b) **Funding arrangements** - the Committee were informed that some outside funding had been obtained and that opportunities had been taken to make representations to some funders (for example Advantage West Midlands) about making available longer term funding streams. However, it considered that this was an area which might merit further work.
- c) **Managing and evaluating performance** – The Committee found that this needed to be improved. Currently there is no central monitoring or management, by the Partnership's secretariat, of all the Partnership's and Theme Groups' initiatives, nor was there a central evaluation process. However, the Committee acknowledged that work to rectify this had now been started.
- d) **Adapting to change** - the Committee was given examples of how the Partnership had re-allocated its resources to meet changed circumstances, for example prioritising work on the economy which led to the establishment of the employment placement scheme. The Committee considered that the Partnership must continue to ensure that its structures were sufficiently flexible to enable it to adapt quickly to future changes.

6.2 Having identified these issues, the Committee made recommendations reflecting its main concerns: these are set out in paragraph 2 above.

Corinne Steele
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APPENDIX 1

Findings from Scrutiny Boards' discussions with Coventry Partnership Theme Groups

1. Achievements

All the Theme Groups were able to point to some concrete achievements:

Community Safety

- Year on year reductions in total recorded crime
- 25% reduction in British Crime Survey comparator crimes
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour

Cultural Partnership

- Cultural strategy revised and adopted 2007 – 2017
- Joint working on external funding bids
- Joint working on promotions and marketing
- Increased awareness of opportunities
- Godiva Awakes, community music rehearsal spaces, shop front theatre etc

Economy, Learning, Skills and Employment

- The number of people coming off benefits has increased by 68% (C&W), higher than the national average
- The average claim duration for Job Seekers Allowance is 22 weeks, lower than the regional average
- Company based programmes, such as those at IKEA, Tesco and Primark have allowed the skills required by the employers to be matched with those of Coventry's residents.
- Successfully bid for and secured funding as a partnership for:
 - Future Jobs Fund (£2.47m)
 - LEGI (£19.6m 2006-2011)
 - Employment Placement Initiative (£550,000)
 - Health & Work Initiative (£1.8m)

Equalities and Community Cohesion

- Production of the Coventry Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy and Community Cohesion Guidance for Practitioners
- Contributions to the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, Holocaust Memorial Day, a conference on Destitution and the Council's Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy.

However, this Group considered that its role was different from those of the other Groups, as its main objective was to work with the others to ensure that equalities and cohesion were embedded into the work of the Partnership and the Local Area Agreement. The results of its work would take some time to become apparent, as it entailed new ways of thinking and might be difficult to measure.

2. **Challenges/Barriers**

As well as achievements, the Groups identified a number of challenges which remained to be addressed, together with some barriers to their effectiveness:

Community Safety

- Addressing alcohol misuse (including binge drinking) and its effect on health and crime
- Work relating to problem drug users
- Potential reduction in resources

Cultural Partnership

- No internal or external funding Economic downturn – people have reduced disposable income, squeeze on all budgets
- 2012 Olympics – opportunity and threat – less funding for other cultural activities and agencies
- Capital improvement
- Small organisations need support to thrive
- Marketing of the city
- Capacity – members also have "day jobs"

Economy, Learning, Skills and Employment

- Resourcing delivery – many initiatives to put in place – challenge of finding resources, and in making sure the services are delivered especially as many of the funding streams currently used expired in 2011
- Dealing with the continuing impact of the recession and being ready for the economic upturn, including ensuring that the city has the skills for future jobs
- Developing new sources of sustainable jobs
- Meeting the needs of young people

Equalities and Community Cohesion

- Time constraints (the Group meets bi-monthly). However, it would be difficult for the Group Members to commit more time than this
- The identified need to look at each theme more than once and to follow up discussions meant that this would be a lengthy process
- It was difficult to measure community cohesion and the difference the Group was making

4.3 **Added Value of Working in Partnership**

The following were identified:

1. Ability to pool financial resources – to fund work which might otherwise not be done
2. Increases other resources (e.g. staffing and knowledge) available to deal with issues
3. Enables wider understanding of problems and wider input to possible solutions
4. Affords opportunities for joint consultation activities
5. Allows each service to reach a wider range of "at risk" groups, helping to achieve equality of service delivery
6. Affords opportunities for services to align their strategic plans
7. Bids for funding are made jointly.

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Meeting with Chair of Coventry Partnership (20th January, 2010) – Questions and Responses

General Questions

1. **How does the Partnership add value to the delivery of public services in Coventry and contribute to improved outcomes for the people of Coventry? (please give examples).**
 - *The Coventry Partnership brings together partners from the private, public and community and voluntary sectors and they are involved in a vast range of important public service provision tackling a wide range of community issues like: alcohol and drug abuse, environmental issues, educational attainment and sustainable transport.*
 - *The Coventry Partnership, through the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets the vision and direction of the Partnership.*
 - *The Partnership is responsible for the delivery of SCS which reflects the needs and concerns of local people. Needs and concerns that were identified through a robust consultation process.*
 - *The Local Area Agreement is negotiated between partners and the Government of the West Midlands (GOWM) on behalf of the Government and was refreshed in March 2009 – baselines were established against the National Indicators chosen within the agreement and targets were set. The LAA is now being refreshed again. The Coventry Local Public Service Board (CLPSB) is chaired by the Chief Executive, Coventry City Council and membership comprises senior representatives from public, private, community and voluntary organisations in the city. The Board allocates resources and performance manages the LAA through the operational groups and communities of interest partnerships that deliver services*
 - *Working in partnership allows the strategic alignment and integration of plans, partnerships, initiatives and resources within Coventry.*

Recent Examples 2009

- *Successful Local Employment Partnership (long-term unemployed helped back to work)*
 - *Two Employment Networking events.*
 - *Connecting to Opportunities*
 - *Migration Impact Fund received for Coventry.*
 - *Health and Work Project launched.*
 - *Employment Placement Scheme commenced.*
 - *Community Cohesion Conference and Cohesion Awards*
 - *Community Cohesion and Data Sharing Strategies have been developed.*
 - *Data Management System being developed.*
 - *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Health and Social Care completed.*
 - *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Community Safety completed.*
 - *ESOL action plan for Coventry developed in partnership.*
 - *Successful "Switch it off" week campaign.*
2. **What is being done to ensure that sufficient financial resources are made available to the Partnership, including the Theme Groups, to maintain its effectiveness?**

- *A variety of mainstreaming funding is allocated to organisations within the Partnership and the main role of the Partnership is to ensure these resources are allocated according to key priorities.*
- *A high level financial mapping review has been carried out by the CLPSB to ensure resources are directed equitably across key priorities.*
- *Area Based Grant (ABG) funding is monitored through the performance management arrangements of key theme groups and communities of interest partnerships represented within the Coventry Partnership e.g. Community Safety Theme Group, Older Peoples Partnership and the Children and Young Peoples Group.*
- *The CLPSB receives regular reports, monitors and performance manages resources to ensure the better and effective use of partner resources against the SCS and LAA to improve and encourage better ways of working to achieve aims and objectives.*
- *The risks of partnership working are spread across the Partnership.*

3. How does the Partnership deliver efficiencies in activities and use of resources?

- *The Partnership is not an executive body and is based on collaborative networks and relationships.*
- *Theme Groups have representation from a variety of partners and work together to creatively deliver services more effectively and improve the outcomes where possible for local people.*
- *Outcome based accountability workshops have been held in a number of areas, where partners have looked to see how they can work together to deliver services more innovatively and creatively.*
- *The Audit Commission through CAA inspects responsible bodies and produces both organisational and an Area Assessment which gives an overview of the partners and how they are working together and where improvements can be made.*
- *The GOWM work with partners to review and refresh the LAA and attend both Coventry Partnership and CLPSB meetings and comment on the activities of the Partnership and discuss areas for improvement.*
- *The CLPSB are receiving reports on all LAA indicators and the stories behind these and making recommendations to Indicator Owners on where improvements might be made.*

4. How do you ensure that Partners implement within their organisations the priorities agreed by the Partnership?

- *Partners are actively involved in the work of the Theme Groups.*
- *Partners, including the community and voluntary sector are engaged and involved in many of the activities and work programmes.*
- *A mapping exercise of resources has taken place to ensure that partners are addressing the key issues within the LAA through their key strategies and plans.*
- *Partners report as appropriate to the Coventry Partnership on their Strategic plans and activities and how they are working towards delivering the SCS and LAA.*

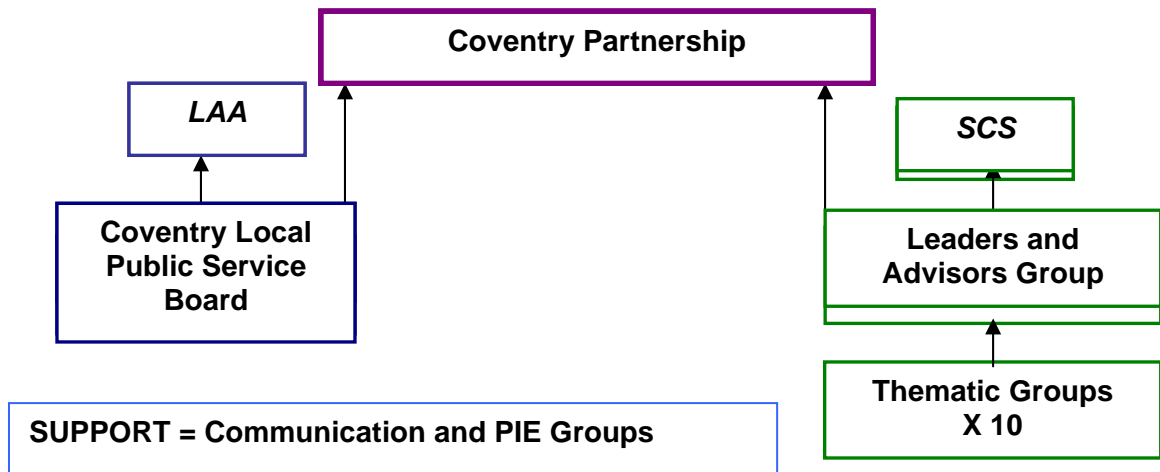
5. How does the Partnership know that it's addressing the issues which are important to people in Coventry?

- *The Coventry Partnership is recognised as a mature and well established partnership with good working relationships and effective participation of all partners from the private, public and community and voluntary sectors.*
- *Partners consulted widely and extensively to listen to the issues and concerns of the people of Coventry before producing the SCS.*
- *Across the ten themes of the SCS there are a total of 34 long term outcomes and 63 short term outcomes. These are to be assessed through 35 National Indicators performance targets within the LAA which reflect the key priorities of the partner agencies and which*

constitute the targets that the Thematic Groups and Communities of Interest Partnerships will be expected to deliver against.

- An effective performance management framework allows the Partnership to:
 - agree improvement plans to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses;
 - ensure that any proposed actions to meet targets are robust;
 - monitor progress against defined targets; and
 - review the effectiveness of the Partnership and its impact on services.

The diagram below shows the Delivery Framework of the partnership.



6. How does the Partnership evaluate the projects for which it is responsible?

- External funders monitor and evaluate projects according to actions plans, outputs and outcomes.
- Projects are delivered and monitored through relevant theme groups or through the CLPSB e.g. Employment Placement Scheme.
- Evaluation plans are normally built into all projects at the start which ensures that resources, planning and capacity are addressed.

7. How does the Partnership monitor progress against LAA targets?

- A report card has been set up for each LAA Indicator– a maximum of two sides showing performance graphically, compared to target and previous performance where this is available. These will be developed over time as more information becomes available, to include further graphics illustrating progress in relation to key target groups or geographical areas and any relevant comparative data. The data is supported by a short analysis of "what we've achieved" (an explanation of progress to date) and "what next" (an explanation of future action required) which creates a better understanding of the issues between partners and creates new linkages and ways of working.
- Progress is reported quarterly to the Coventry Local Public Service Board.
- Reporting Cycle (Development) – A reporting cycle for the LAA so that a more in depth dialogue and conversation about performance improvement has been approved by the CLPSB. This has led to a better understanding of Partnership arrangements and issues.
- The Community, Voluntary and Private Sectors are now represented on the CLPSB.

- *Data Management System (Development) - A new electronic system is being implemented for partners to use under the umbrella of the Coventry Partnership. The aim of the system is to ensure performance information is readily available to partners on line, that there will be improved use of the information to aid decision making and to provide more effective monitoring and review processes.*

If progress is not as good as it should be, how do you address this?

- *The CLPSB collectively decide what actions they might take to improve performance and these are then actioned.*
- *Recent actions have been:*
 - *Teenage Pregnancy put onto Head teachers' and Governors' Agendas.*
 - *Sexual Health and Relationship Policy developed and approved and training now being rolled out, fundamentally by Learning to Deliver Funding.*
 - *Employment Placement Scheme put into place to ensure 100 local people receive a 6 month work opportunity placement.*
 - *Triage in the City Centre sponsored over the festive session to reduce the demand on the A&E service and to ensure people are reporting incidents to the Police.*

8. How could Scrutiny help with the work of the Partnership?

- *Scrutiny has been linked to LAA performance and could look at the Coventry Partnership work programme to join up and build on common issues.*
- *Scrutiny has already talked to several of the thematic groups within the partnership and could over the next 12 months review the work of the other thematic groups.*

Questions relating to the Theme Groups

9. Two of the Theme Groups (Cultural Partnership and Equalities and Community Cohesion) report that they are constrained by the amount of time which their members can devote to the Groups' work. How widespread is this problem?

- *The Partnership is dependent upon the 'good will' of partners to allow their employees to participate in partnership work and activities.*
- *Partners within the Coventry Partnership see the benefits of working collaboratively and are involved throughout the partnership structure and participate as effectively as they possible can.*

How does this affect the effectiveness of the Partnership?

- *Some thematic groups do have more resources than others, some groups are mandatory e.g. Community Safety, Health and Children and Young People.*
- *Time factor – would apply to all groups within the partnership. Ideally the work of the group would aim to enhance day to day work loads.*
- *Activities could be limited. But there is a culture in Coventry of wanting to be involved.*

10. How is the work of the Theme Groups reported to the Partnership?

- *The Theme Group present progress reports to the Coventry Partnership as requested. Presentations and reports were received in 2009 from the Environment Group, Culture and Recreation, Equalities and Cohesion, Health and Well-being Group, Economy, Learning, Skills and Employment and Business Groups.*

- *Coventry Partnership website – this has between 19,000 and 20,000 hits per month. All thematic partnerships and groups have pages within the website, all agenda, minutes and events can be viewed. The website is kept up to date.*
- *Coventry Partnership News bulletin - produced quarterly reflecting activities that have taken place during the previous quarter.*
- *LAA actions are produced and monitored and can be viewed on the partnership website.*

Performance Improvements that have already happened from the general review in 2009 are:

- *Thematic Groups – The structure and focus of thematic groups continues to evolve to ensure that they are actively delivering the priorities contained within the SCS. The Environment Group, the Communications Group and the Progress, Impact and Evaluation Group have all undergone change. The role of the Health and Well being Group is currently being reviewed.*

How is duplication of work avoided?

The Partnership has two Support Officers who work with the thematic groups to:

- *Evaluate and review thematic group activities*
- *Establish cross-cutting links between thematic groups and the wider partnership*
- *Ensure that thematic groups deliver aspects of the SCS and LAA*
- *Support partners in the development of cross-cutting actions*
- *Ensure duplication is avoided.*

11. How will you ensure that there is consistency in the way that equality and community cohesion is addressed by the Theme Groups?

- *The key aim of the Equalities and Community Cohesion Theme Group is to provide an effective advisory, supportive co-ordinating role within the wider Coventry Partnership to ensure that all projects and Partnership activities contribute to Coventry becoming a more equal and cohesive city.*
- *The Theme Group were tasked by the Coventry Partnership to look at how equalities and cohesion are being delivered through the LAA.*
- *Community Cohesion Guidance: This guide has been produced with the aim of enabling practitioners to embed community cohesion into the delivery of mainstream services. This guidance includes a number of good practice examples demonstrating where cohesion has successfully been embedded into mainstream service delivery or short term projects. The guidance can be found on the Coventry Partnership website.*
- *The Theme Groups also ensure that equalities and cohesion are embedded into their approach to implementing the LAA. A series of discussions with LAA Indicator owners/theme lead and members of other Theme Groups looked at indicators under each of the themes of the SCS. The purpose of these discussions was to enable a joint understanding of the issues affecting each theme and the impact of equality of opportunity and cohesion.*