



VCS Representation Feedback

Name: ... Richard Quallington..... Organisation ...WIC/Community First

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I attended Worcestershire Partnership Management Group Date24.03.10

Date of next meeting.....23.06.2010

1. Items of interest to the VCS were:

Feedback on main discussion/issues: - report of the meeting

The Chair Michael Clarke welcomed everyone to the meeting. Retiring **Chief Superintendent David Spencer** was thanked for his contribution to the partnership over many years and his successor **Simon Edens - Assistant Chief Constable** was welcomed to the management group. **Maggie Bryan** will be taking over from **Leigh Marchant** as partnership coordinator during her 12 month sabbatical.

The **notes of the previous** meeting held on the 26th Jan 10 were confirmed as an accurate record. It was agreed that Frances Howie (chair of the health and well being theme group) and I would bring a paper to the next meeting of the group on the rural deprivation work carried out by OCSI (Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion) prior to a presentation by OCSI at the Board meeting in July.

Governance and accountability review - It was agreed that time had marched on since the review had been completed and that the wider environment and context had changed considerably. The recommendations therefore need to be reviewed in the light of these changes and in relation to the emerging Total Place activity which was gathering momentum. The following actions were agreed:-

- A culture of **substitution at meetings** would not be encouraged – however one named substitute/alternate would be permitted. In the case of theme groups substitution/alternate would normally go to the vice chair of the theme group.
- **Sustainable Community Strategy** - It was agreed that there should be a single SCS in future with specific chapters focussing on district LSP's issues and local delivery.

Understanding Worcestershire – the Worcestershire County Council Research and Intelligence unit presented on a new shared approach to data gathering and analysis across the NHS, WCC, DC's and the Fire and Rescue service partners. The partnership will be used to oversee regular research across Worcestershire (circa 7500 households) on a variety of issues – recent questions based on the place survey framework. Generally responses had been much more positive than the place survey. I spoke to David Onions the lead officer for the work after the meeting about VCS involvement and he agreed to discuss future VCS inclusion in the group at the next meeting and report back. This potentially could provide the VCS with access to invaluable research and intelligence resources going forward. David has agreed to provide a

breakdown of the information on NI6 (a thriving 3rd sector) across Worcestershire by district and in particular in relation to the areas of highest need.

Total Place Submission – There was currently no formal feedback from the government on the Worcestershire submission. The informal feedback has been very positive particularly in relation to the work that partners had been doing over asset management – this could become a national pilot. Public sector partners are currently exploring what projects should be undertaken next under the Total Place theme. It seems likely that a project focussing on public sector efficiency savings in order to support budget preparations for 2011-14 will be brought forward under the umbrella of Total Place. It is clear that the Total Place initiative will have an important impact on future Worcestershire Partnership arrangements as there is unlikely to be sufficient resource available to support two separate structures. Further discussions within the Shenstone group are planned with any structural changes likely to be considered and agreed over the autumn following endorsement by the Worcestershire Assembly.

CAA – There will be a reference group for the next round of the CAA to oversee the gathering of evidence and presentation of joined up messages. The Audit Commission have specified that it wants to consider ‘older people and rurality’ and ‘third sector engagement’ as two of a number of themes in the next tranche. It is not at all clear what activity will be examined in detail. I suggested that the reference group needed some VCS input in order to help it shape the work and am hopeful that this offer will be taken up by those responsible for drawing the reference group together.

LAA refresh – this has now been submitted to GOWM with some revised though challenging targets agreed. Agreement could not be reached over the under 18 conception rate target and it seems likely that this will be removed from the reward grant calculations for 08-11. The revised methodology for the calculation of the reward grant is very complex and dependent upon performance across the piece. Total amounts are not very large at circa £3.2 million max. Given this the management group agreed that it was most important to focus on the most beneficial outcomes for Worcestershire rather than to chase targets – theme groups would be asked to confirm which targets should be prioritised on this basis. I asked about the progress in relation to payment of the current **reward grant**, first tranche due at the end of March. It was confirmed that this was still in line for payment on time and should bring in **circa £4.1 million**. The allocation of this resource once received had yet to be confirmed.

Refresh of the **Worcestershire Economic Strategy (WES)** – As the current WES does not reflect the impact of the current UK recession it was agreed that there was an urgent need for updating and revision. WES is currently predicated on false assumptions of full employment and unrealistic economic growth and is clearly no longer fit for purpose. There was some discussion over the timescale for the review which needed to be completed for consideration by Worcestershire County Council’s cabinet in July. This would only leave a 6 week consultation period which would not be in line with Compact principles. A full 12 week period of consultation would result in a delay in the adoption of the WES until the autumn which could be very detrimental to the county being able to set out its stall early in the lifetime of a new government. Failure to achieve an agreed WES in a timely manner could impact on the level of future public investment in Worcestershire going forward. I received some reassurance that whilst the WES provided the overarching framework of need and priority there would be further opportunities for consultation and engagement of the sector in relation to some of the more specific elements contained in the strategy. It is planned that the draft WES will be ready for consultation by the end of March! There will then be a 6 week period of consultation.

Olympics 2012 – there was some discussion over whether Worcestershire would want to participate in the Olympic torch relay – there would be a cost to local partners in terms of

policing, traffic diversion, clear up etc. It was agreed that the public sector would address this via a virtual conversation outside of the management group meeting.

2. Issues I raised on behalf of the VCS were:

- **Stronger Communities group** – I raised some concern that several governance reviews had raised the need for a Stronger Communities Group to be formed but that as yet this still had not been achieved. Jennifer Taylor confirmed that she would review the recommendation in the light of feedback from the various chairs of elements of the stronger communities theme who were not in favour of a single group. There will be a workshop/further consultation over this during April and May to consider how best to move forward with improved coordination of this activity going forward.

3. Report to be submitted for 'The Voice' Newsletter Article – please circle?

No

4. Please Comment on any problems or difficulties

**5. As a VCS Representative how would you rate the impact of your work in this role?
(Please highlight a number between 1 and 5: With 1 being of little impact, 3 being of moderate impact, and 5 being of greatest impact)**

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|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| • On yourself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • On The Partnership | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • On the wider VCS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| • L.A.A as a whole | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Signed **Date** ...24.03.10.....

Please return this form to Jim Smith VCS Voices Hub, Platform 1 Gt Malvern Station, Station Approach, Malvern WR14 3AU or via e-mail at wavocc@btconnect.com