

'WEST CHESHIRE TOGETHER' LSP STEERING GROUP

BRIEFING NOTE FROM MEETING:

27th January 2011

Cheshire West and Chester Budget Consultation

The meeting opened with Mike Jones presenting an overview of the Councils budget proposals for 2011/12. He confirmed that the budget, which is due to be set in February 2011, has added importance in the context of the comprehensive spending review. However, the Council has not waited for these funding reductions to be announced to drive down costs – this has been happening since day one – whilst protecting and enhancing front line services. Mike handed the Chair of the meeting to John Salt (Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service) to manage the discussion amongst partners. Questions arose relating to the Council commitment to early intervention and prevention activity for children and families, the level of commitment to providing services for older people through the Supporting People programme and the importance of commissioning services from locally based companies which aren't always the cheapest providers. Mike confirmed that the Council recognised the importance of all of these issues.

Locality Working Update

Alison Armstrong gave an update on work underway to progress the localism agenda. This was set within the overall context of not only the shift towards greater local autonomy through the devolution of power and responsibility from Whitehall to the lowest practicable level, but also the shift towards great productivity whilst achieving efficiencies and ensuring value for money. The impact of these changes on the LSP will be discussed over coming months. More specifically, the new approach to locality working through the Area Partnership Boards and below is progressing quickly through work to:

- *Empower local communities*: includes capacity building work to develop community led plans
- *Organisational change*: work underway to establish integrated local teams and single budgets/plans
- *Culture change*: promoting innovation and change

Wider partner engagement and involvement is planned over coming months.

Second Homes Taxation Funding: Green Doctor Project

The Green Doctor project was one of the projects that the LSP supported in 2010/11. Focusing on Greenfields and Glebe Green (low income wards within Winsford) the 'Green Doctors' have made over 140 home visits in order to help tackle fuel poverty through introducing energy efficiency measures. The project has been greatly assisted through the employment of *Martin Seed* and *Adam Gerrard*, Green Doctor Assistants, who have been on six month contracts through the Future Jobs Fund initiative. It is hoped that the project could be extended - based on the trust gained from local residents it is possible that this sort of project could be a precursor to neighbourhood planning.

Second Homes Taxation Funding Applications: 2010/11

A small pot of funding (approx. £31k) has been allocated to the LSP from the income generated by the current reduction in the Second Homes Council Tax discount (from 50% to 25%). Based on the key criteria that projects should support the principles of the 'Big Society', funding bids had been submitted from across the partnership totalling around £275k. Sifting took place on the basis of which projects would support the principles of 'Big Society' to best effect, which could not be funded from elsewhere and which were deliverable within tight timescales in order to arrive at a shortlist which was supported by the LSP.

Ageing Strategy

This strategy arose from a deficiency identified in the 2009 Comprehensive Area Assessment around planning for our ageing population. The Health and Wellbeing Thematic Partnership has led on this piece of work which has sought to set out the over arching strategic framework for Ageing Well in West Cheshire over the next decade. It sets out a range of themes covering all aspects of a good quality of life for older people, including increasing choice and positive contributions, improving economic wellbeing and an attractive and sustainable environment. In addition to endorsing this framework, partners agreed to support the continuation of the project team in order to take forward key elements of the plan, including implementing an ongoing communication and engagement plan.

Faith Sector Audit 2010: Results

Rev. Andy Glover presented the full audit of the faith sector which had been undertaken across the West Cheshire area. This has been led by 'Link Up', a network of Churches and Church leaders drawn from all denominations from in and around Chester, West Cheshire and into North Wales. The survey achieved a 56% response rate and uncovered 420 community initiatives serving over 11,000 users (nearly 6,000 weekly). Further analysis to demonstrate how this work contributes to our strategic priorities had been undertaken and it was estimated that, if this sample was representative, the financial contribution of this level of volunteering to the West Cheshire economy could be in the region of £5,000,000. For further details, visit www.linkup.uk.net

Public Sector Representation on Compact Implementation Group

The Compact is an agreement between the Third sector (voluntary, community, faith, social enterprise and other not for profit groups and organisations) and the Public Sector in West Cheshire to improve the ways in which we work together. It sets out a framework for better working relationships through shared principles, undertakings and actions. For the Compact to be successful, it needs to be understood and embedded in policy and practice across both the Third sector and the Public sector and, in order to do this, and to develop a consistent approach to the implementation of the Compact, a 'Compact Implementation Group' has been set up. Public Sector partners were encouraged to ensure that their organisations are represented at this group in order that it is promoted and embedded within the Public sector.

Next LSP Network Event: Tuesday 17th May 2011 at Ellesmere Port Civic Centre

DATE OF NEXT LSP STEERING GROUP MEETING:

Thursday 14th April 2011 (2 – 4pm)

Venue to be confirmed

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Visit the 'West Cheshire Together' website at: www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk