

STEPS TO ACTION: CHAIR'S REPORT

Following discussions at the last Chester APB and subsequent sub-group deliberations about the development of Chester Area Action Plan, the following key points were made:-

- The work of the Chester APB centres around “added value” through cooperative working
- For partners, it is recognised that the networking, learning and information sharing opportunity that the APB provides enables better partnership working and the chance for partners to add value and develop shared projects & initiatives, which would not otherwise happen or would take much longer to come to fruition
- Much added work has taken place but is not readily captured or reported back on by partners – we also need to be measuring the impact of what is being achieved
- Partners need to have a consistent approach at APB level; and as part of which it is important that we all demonstrate an equal level of commitment to the shared APB agenda and give equitable support in terms of time, resources, ways of working etc
- Crucially, as the partners on Chester APB we need to confirm our shared aspirations and priorities in order to make a tangible and measurable difference to meeting the key issues affecting the communities of Chester.
- Due to the limits on all our partners’ resources and in line with best practice approaches of Total Place and emerging through Community Budgets, as Chester APB we need to agree and then concentrate on delivering against its priorities. In this way it will be able to make a real and identifiable difference.
- To achieve this, all partners will need to committing and focusing their efforts and resources together – the outcomes will be harder and less achievable if it falls to some of the partners rather than all
- Through this approach as Chester APB we will be able to identify any gaps and work towards the development of a shared budget to procure / commission services to meet these gaps. It will also move the APB to a position where we can start to get “upstream” on issues and look to preventing rather than curing / resolving issues

- To achieve this, there is a need for a framework for key operational staff, our “virtual” team, to work towards. It may be necessary for them to come together to carry out this partnership work on occasions; recognising that it is important not to be meeting for meetings’ sake but to achieve positive outcomes
- To demonstrate the impact of our joint efforts, there is a need to audit and to measure what is already being achieved collectively
- A longer term intention is for the APB to move towards a commissioning agenda; this is set out in the terms of reference. To do this APB needs to sponsor a more responsible approach towards the issues set out in the area profile for Chester

Having considered the views of the Board, I am proposing the following course of action:-

1. A Steering Group is set up and comprises of key partners. It meets every six - eight weeks with leading service providers to;
 - a) establish the current approach to service delivery in the Chester area
 - b) determine whether there is a need to reshape services to meet the needs of the area / locality (universal services vs local needs) and achieve better outcomes for the locality.
 - c) consider progress with achievements against agreed priority outcomes from the Priority Action Groups (see 4 below)
2. Chester APB main membership continues to meets for the wider partnership discussions and to enable networking opportunities – for a half day session twice a year
3. Chester APB approves the priorities for the Action Plan which were considered at the September meeting;
 - Enhancing health and well-being / reducing health inequalities
 - Enabling economic growth (including employment support & infrastructure, enterprise communities & capacity building)
 - Improving the environment and regenerating neighbourhoods (including housing)
- 4 The Chester APB sets up three Priority Action Groups comprising of key operational staff and APB members. Each of which will be required to develop an Action Plan to deliver against its priority (see above) and to report back to each meeting of the APB’s Steering Group on its achievement of the outcomes. These groups will meet on an exceptions basis rather than a regular meeting cycle.

John Denny, Chair of Chester Area Partnership Board

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