

Minutes of a meeting of the Rural West APB

Held on: Tuesday, 8th November 2011 @2.00pm

Venue: Guildhall, Chester

Present

Rob Callow – CW&C (Rural West)

Karen Cove – Connexions

Keith Curbishley – Cheshire Police

Paul Davies – Chester Voluntary Action

Jeanie Gardiner – Cheshire Community Action

Elaine Grant – CW&C (Rural West)

Pat Johnson – NHS Western Cheshire

Steve Kent – CW&C Council

Alison Linfield – Link-Up

Cllr. Kay Loch – CW&C Council

Julia Nundy – Chester District Housing Trust

Cllr. Stuart Parker – CW&C Council

Carol Weaver – (Chair) /Rural Parishes Representative

Barry Williams – Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service

Apologies

Carol Berry – Chester Voluntary Action

1. Welcome and Introductions

Carol Weaver welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made and apologies noted.

2. Outcomes to be achieved from meeting

The timeliness of today's meeting was noted following on from the Locality Working Scrutiny Committee meeting of the previous evening which had also involved some of the partners from the Rural West APB. The Committee had focussed on Cheshire West and Chester's five APB areas, discussing and receiving evidence in terms of the APB's achievements, examples of effective partnership working and aspirations.

Today's meeting of the Rural West APB had been arranged as an opportunity to consider refreshing the priorities within an informal discussion. The main objectives being to:

- Agree key priorities for the next 12 months
- Identify key partners to lead and develop the priorities

3. General Discussion

Partners were invited to discuss the current APB priorities with a view of whether they were still relevant and to also discuss any gaps or areas for improvement

The following points were raised:

In refreshing priorities should the APB's legacy or long term benefits be considered?

- It was agreed that some of the APB projects and initiatives had worked and would be a long term benefit to Rural West communities e.g. Leech Lane in Malpas and whilst others hadn't been as successful, such as the Neston transport initiative
- It was also agreed that many initiatives and projects wouldn't have been progressed at all or been trialled without the involvement of the APB.

The sharing of information between partners/communities

- It would be helpful to hold more regular meetings with the representatives of APB Parish Councils reps to facilitate the sharing of best practice.
- As some of our partners sit on more than one of the five APB's, it was recognised that some activities are replicated in other APB areas. It was suggested regular meetings of the chairs of the five APB's would facilitate the sharing of best practise.
- Any key issues raised from community forums/public meetings could be shared with APB partners
- Gathering and sharing of databases and information in order to signpost the APB to areas of vulnerability was a high priority. Also to look at sharing information with other organisations e.g. WI, Older Peoples groups.

Ageing population

Partners discussed comparable schemes that they were involved with or aware of e.g. "Silver Dream Fund", Wirral and Ellesmere Port project for older people in the farming community, "Snow Angels" and Village agents were all mentioned which highlighted the variety and number of projects working to broadly the same remit.

It was suggested that working together and communicating more effectively would result in a more co-ordinated response to common objectives.

Emergency Situations in Rural Areas (bad weather/floods)

Partners discussed how the APB could assist communities to respond to the practicalities of emergency situations, e.g., transport, safety, housebound residents etc. It was highlighted that there needed to be a greater focus on people rather than situation or place.

Actions:

- Regular meetings with Parish Council representatives to be re-established (**CW, RC**)
- Chairs /Area Managers to meet to share best practises within the five areas. (**CW, RC**)

4. APB Area of Focus - Rural Isolation

It was agreed that issues such as emergency planning, vulnerable people, transport etc can all be captured under a general priority of “*rural isolation*” which was agreed should be the APB’s focus over the next 12 months

In order for the APB to respond effectively to local issues it was suggested that a number of improvements needed to be considered;

- Improved communication and the sharing of information between partners and communities
- Strengthening the APB’s ability to co-ordinate activities and services across Rural West,
- Developing a responsive problem solving role to tackle often complex and difficult issues

Actions:

- Undertake a mapping exercise of partner’s plans and strategies for dealing with emergency situations (**RC**)
- Produce a paper outlining Rural West APB’s revised aims and approach for partnership working. (**CW, SK, RC**).

4. Date of next meeting

To keep momentum to the meeting, it was agreed to arrange the next Rural West APB meeting earlier than normal. (The date and venue in mid January will be confirmed nearer the time).