

Supplementary Information - Scrutiny Topic Feasibility Study - Key Strategic Partnership Working

Comments of Head of Performance & Improvements

(Received late with apologies)

Cllr. Merrett is correct in his analysis of the importance of good partnership working and the impact on delivering local solutions and the Council's rating within the CPA framework. He is also correct that areas for development have been identified by both the Audit Commission and the IDeA Peer Review.

Perhaps what is less clear are the steps that have and are being made to improve the situation.

Within the Organisational Effectiveness Programme(OEP) the council is committed to improving city leadership and partnership working is a major strand of that work. The champion for this is Bill Woolley who is also going to be responsible for the LSP and partnerships. The detailed plans for what is going to be delivered through that Corporate Priority is still being worked on.

However, one piece of work which is progressing already, through Performance Improvement Team, is to set up a 'data hub' which will draw together information from a number of organisations and enable it to be used in planning and delivering services across the city. In undertaking this work, which is only just commencing, council officers are meeting with representatives from other agencies and organisations and beginning real collaborative working.

The progression of this work has been partially spurred on by the preparation of the Local Area Agreement. In developing the agreement a multi agency steering group has been created and, in my view, this has already improved relationships between organisations through a structured dialogue around the LAA outcomes framework. Partners are beginning to have a greater understanding of each others' businesses and issues across the city. Again, in my view, the LAA discussions have already improved communications and awareness.

As a part of the LAA, governance arrangements need to be clearly defined and a report has been drafted setting out a new LSP structure and constitution. This is due to be considered at the meeting of the LSP on 28th September. It builds on agreements made in principle at the May meeting of the LSP Board. The report sets out the roles of the various parts of the Partnership, including the key Sub Partnerships.

Finally, the Audit Commission have recently undertaken a review of our partnership working and has reported back to the council. I have not seen a

copy of their findings and recommendations. I understand that they have recognised that there have been improvements made, but as always have identified areas for development. These will no doubt be taken in to consideration by Bill Woolley when progressing his part of the OEP.

In conclusion I hope Members can see that there is much going on to address this area which has been recognised as one for development. However, it is still early days to see the full impact of the changes that are being implemented. My view is that it is not timely to undertake the review now. Further negotiations around the LAA and the inevitable impact that will have on developing better working relationships will again improve the effectiveness of our partnerships.

Overview and Scrutiny Members may consider that their time would be better directed towards partnerships in the middle of next year when the LAA has been concluded, the impact of the changes in the LSP structure have had time to bed in and the delivery partnerships are more focussed on what they need to do. It would also be opportune for the review to be undertaken then as the Community Strategy is due for refresh in 2007.