

WIRRAL LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP - EXECUTIVE BOARD**WEDNESDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 2010****INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES****2010 GOVERNANCE REVIEW AND FUTURE PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES****1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The report presents the findings of the 2010 review of governance arrangements for Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The review has considered the strategic and operational framework of the Partnership to date with a view to identifying how this might be refreshed in order to provide a revised set of shared improvement priorities that will provide the future basis for partnership working.
- 1.2. The review also considered the outcomes of the annual review of the Local Area Agreement, February 2010, and the findings of a self evaluation of the Partnership, 2009.
- 1.3. The report also highlights a number of significant changes in the external and internal environments in which the Partnership operates and poses a number of questions about the role of the Partnership in this new context.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Executive Board members are requested to:
 - Consider the findings of the governance review outlined in the report and in light of the significant changes, agree that further work is undertaken to better understand the impact that these will have on partners and the future role of the Partnership.
 - Receive a further report at the January meeting of the Board that identifies these issues in more detail.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The governance arrangements of the LSP were last reviewed, April 2009 when the current structure of Executive Board, Assembly and Management Group was agreed. The review and resultant structure reflected good practice guidance from the Audit Commission and from the Department of Communities and Local Government at the time.
- 3.2. Also in April 2009, Wirral Council adopted a, *'Partnership Governance Framework and Toolkit'* which demonstrates the key principles and quality standards associated with partnership working that we are committed to. The toolkit provides a framework against which partnerships may benchmark their



activity and outcomes and identify areas where they may wish to improve their performance. The toolkit was used as a basis for the governance review.

- 3.3. The Toolkit states that any partnership needs to coordinate, commission or deliver activities at a borough-wide or local level, that *substantially* contribute towards the Local Area Agreement or other objectives set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.4. The Toolkit goes on to say that existing partnerships should be reviewed annually to ensure they continue to contribute to the strategic objectives, outcomes and targets agreed by the Partnership. The review offers assurance that proper systems are in place in order that performance of the Partnership may be monitored and evaluated.

4. GOVERNANCE REVIEW

- 4.1. The Executive Board, Assembly and Management Groups were all assessed against the Toolkit framework which poses a series of questions that challenge the Partnership to identify current partnership activity, evaluate the work to date, and suggest actions for improvement.
- 4.2. A review of the risk management arrangements of the Partnership is also underway. An updated risk register will be reported to the Board in due course.
- 4.3. The governance review also considered the outcomes of the annual review of the Local Area Agreement, February 2010 and the findings of a self evaluation of the Partnership, 2009.

5. GOVERNANCE REVIEW – FINDINGS

- 5.1. Assessment against the Partnership Toolkit identified a number of areas where performance of the Partnership is strong:
 - Performance management processes
 - Risk assessment of Local Area Agreement indicators
 - Level and breadth of partnership membership
- 5.2. These areas are reflective of the findings of the annual review of the LAA which highlighted improved delivery structures and a performance management culture that focussed on addressing key challenges.
- 5.3. A number of areas where governance arrangements could be strengthened were also highlighted in the review:
 - Clarifying and formalising some decision making processes and actions between partners
 - Developing a code of conduct for the partnership

- A review of communications and opportunities to inform residents of the successes of the LSP
- Developing a shared research and intelligence function

5.4. A number of these finding mirror those of the 2009 self evaluation when a number of recommendations were made including:

- To improve clarity around the focus of the Partnership and what it wishes to achieve
- To improve the ways in which the Partnership manages knowledge (this is currently being implemented through the Knowledge Management project sponsored by NWIEP and will report towards the end of the year)
- To improve communications between the Partnership and its local communities to raise awareness of the positive impacts of the Partnership
- To explore joint commissioning / closer collaboration in order to achieve efficiencies

6. FUTURE CHALLENGES

6.1. The environment in which the Partnership operates is significantly different when compared with just a few months ago. A number of external factors are easily identifiable that are impacting on partners. These factors include:

- Budget pressures that we are already aware of and the Comprehensive Spending Review still to be announced
- A very different regulatory environment with a substantial shift from national to local accountability
- Uncertain future for Local Area Agreements after March 2011
- Strong messages about devolution and localisation from Whitehall – Big Society / small government, and the pending Localism Bill
- Total Place / Place based budgeting
- Changes to national and local health services with NHS Commissioning Boards and GP consortia
- The Localism review that is considering how decision making, budgets and services may be devolved to local communities
- The consultation exercise to inform future Council priorities

Partners should consider how they wish to respond collectively to these challenges. A shared understanding of partners' views on the future role for the Partnership would help us to determine how we might best continue to deliver high quality services that are relevant to our local communities.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Executive Board members are requested to:

- Consider the findings of the governance review outlined in the report, and in light of the significant changes, agree that further work is undertaken to better understand the impact that these will have on partners and the future role of the Partnership.

- Consider a further report at the January meeting of the Board that identifies these issues in more detail.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership - Governance update report – April 2009
- Partnership Toolkit, Wirral MBC Cabinet, April 2009
- Partnership Self-Evaluation and Improvement, LSP Executive Board, September 2009
- Wirral Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement Annual Review - January 2010

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