

WEST CUMBRIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

**Notes of the meeting of the Social Well-being Review Group held on 27th May 2005
at the Oval Centre, Salterbeck, Workington**

Community representatives present

Peter Johnstone (*Older People*), Cllr Stewart Samson (*Cumbria County Council – Allerdale Local Committee*), Chris Shaw (*Cumbria Association of Local Councils*), Willie Slavin (*Families*)

Public services representatives present

Ben Brinicombe (*Allerdale Borough Council*), Andrew Burnie (*JobCentre Plus*), Christine Clark (*Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator*), Paul Dobie (*Drug and Alcohol Action Team*), Valerie Hallard (*Learning & Skills Council*), Christine Harrison (*West Cumbria Primary Care Trust*), Carol Renshaw (*Sport Action Zone*)

Advisers present

Clare Killeen (*West Cumbria Strategic Partnership Support Officer*), Jane Muller (*Lead Officer to the Group*)

Apologies received from community representatives

Cllr Joe McAllister (*Cumbria County Council – Copeland Local Committee*), Cllr Willis Metherall (*Copeland Borough Council*), Cllr Phil Tibble - Chair (*Allerdale Borough Council*), Roland Woodward (*West Cumbria Primary Care Trust*)

Willie Slavin took the Chair in the absence of Cllr Tibble.

1. Introduction

Ben Brinicombe, Andrew Burnie, and Paul Dobie were welcomed to their first meeting of the group.

2. Announcements/Correspondence

There were no announcements or correspondence to report.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2005 were considered. It was pointed out that “Vice” had been mistakenly omitted from the introduction informing the group that Willie Slavin had recently been elected *Vice* Chair of Strategic Co-ordination Group.

With the above omission noted, the minutes were **AGREED** as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Nominations for Chair – the group were informed that no suggestions or nominations had been received.

Number of targets for which the group is responsible – the group noted that Partnership policy and performance officers had had an initial discussion about the issue and would consider recommendations at their next meeting in July.

4. Worklessness

Andrew Burnie, JobCentre Plus Business Delivery Manager, made a presentation to the group based on the content of the West Cumbria Target Delivery Plan for reducing worklessness. Andrew explained that he, within JobCentre Plus in Cumbria, held the brief for strategic partnership working and that he had recently completed the Target Delivery Plan with guidance from the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator.

The strategic objective identified in the plan is;

“To increase the employment rates of disadvantaged groups in priority localities, taking account of the economic cycle – lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50 and over, people with disabilities, those without qualification or less than Level 2 qualification.”

Andrew explained that the data contained in the plan will be reinforced later this year.

Andrew informed the group that the Learning & Skills Council had an overarching responsibility in relation to those with no qualifications.

Willie Slavin, the Interest Group Representative for Families, expressed his concerns that unemployment is always seen as a negative and that policy in relation to unemployment is reflective of this. Willie identified instances where some women make a conscious decision not to work and to stay at home with their families as positive and suggested that policy should be changed in order to reflect this.

Andrew informed the group that work was being carried out to assess what JobCentre Plus provision can be provided in Children’s Centres across the County.

Andrew reported that employment data in relation to increasing the employment rate of ethnic minorities was not currently collected in Cumbria; however, the results of the Attitudes Survey recently carried out by Cumbria County Council will be used to provide baseline information when the results data is made available to Andrew.

When considering the data provided in relation to unemployment rates of people aged over 50, members of the group raised the issue of unclaimed benefits. It was suggested that agencies should take a more proactive approach to tackling this issue and link their systems so that instances of unclaimed benefit can be identified and the potential recipients contacted. Andrew reported that predicted future demographic change in Cumbria was being taken account of in JobCentre Plus’s planning processes.

When considering the data provided in the plan in relation to unemployment rates of the sick and disabled, the group focused on ensuring some current activities will be mainstreamed. Andrew reported that the Pathways to Work scheme will be mainstreamed in October and further developed over the next two years. The need to ensure that the Routes to Work scheme was also joined up more closely to the mainstream was also highlighted.

There was no information provided in relation to the unemployment rates of those with low qualifications as it had not been available, however, some information had just very recently become available and Andrew will report on this in the near future. The Drug and Alcohol Action Team can also provide some information in respect of those with low qualifications.

Andrew then led a discussion on Part Two of the Target Delivery Plan (Evidence – analysis of performance and of local conditions). Members of the group suggested, and expressed concerns, that a large proportion of new jobs in West Cumbria were part-time.

Sport and creative industries was identified as a growth sector.

The revitalisation of the Local Employment Group, which would feed into this group, was identified as a key action required to make progress in joining up activity to reduce worklessness.

Andrew was keen to receive any further comments from the group after the meeting – to be sent to the Partnership Support Officer who would forward them to Andrew.

Andrew considered early 2006 as an appropriate time for the Partnership to conduct the next review of the Target Delivery Plan for reducing worklessness.

5. Annual Report – narrative

Christine Harrison tabled a first draft of the social well-being narrative for the Partnership's Annual Report 2004/05. The draft included an overview of progress made towards targets and, specifically, in relation to education, health, and worklessness.

It was stated that culture was missing from the report and the development of an infrastructure around sport and physical activity should be included.

There was no mention of the shortage of dental services in West Cumbria in the report and, although this was a national problem and the Cumbria County Council Health & Well-being Overview & Scrutiny Committee were monitoring the situation across Cumbria, some members felt that the group's action regarding this issue should be included in the report.

Some members of the group also felt that something specific in relation to older people should be included in the report.

6. Partnership Update

Members were reminded that, resulting from the Diagnostic Assessment of the issues facing the Partnership completed earlier this year by Clare Babbs (Neighbourhood Renewal Adviser), some actions had been identified that required the support of expertise commissioned through the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. It was reported that the commissioning process had not been completed; however, some confirmation was expected shortly.

Paul Dobie informed the group that the Drug and Alcohol Action Team were holding a strategy and planning event on 16th June 2005 and invited any representative of the group who would like to attend.

Members were asked to submit any ideas they had for an Arts and Health Project to Allerdale or Copeland Borough Council Arts Development Units.

Valerie Hallard reported that, as part of the implementation of the 14-19 Action Plan, a network was being developed, in conjunction with Lakes College West Cumbria, to research the views of young people.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Friday, 24th June 2005 at 10.00am in the Lakes College West Cumbria Boardroom.

*Clare Killeen
Partnership Support Officer
June 2005*