

Information/Discussion Paper

Economy and Business Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19th September 2011

Improving Partnership Structures

This note contains the information to keep members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1** The current strategic partnership structures were agreed and implemented in 2007 to tie in with the publication of the “Our Future Our Choice” community strategy. The structure of the Cheltenham Strategic Partnership (CSP) management group supported by 6 thematic partnerships has served the borough well over the past 4 years and complemented similar county structures.
- 1.2** The demise of the local area agreement, comprehensive area assessments and the statutory obligations to produce a community strategy has given us a free-hand to re-design partnership structures that can support the commissioning and delivery of public services to meet local needs within the context of declining public sector finances.
- 1.3** With this in mind, senior officers and practitioners within the public sector and the voluntary and community sector, participated in the Partnership Improvement Programme (PIP) which met three times between March and May 2011. The sessions were facilitated by representatives from the Institute of Voluntary Action and Research as part of a programme funded by the Local Government Improvement and Development Group. The expectation was that the any new structures should address 3 key challenges:
 - Ensuring that there is greater focus/clarity around the work of the partnerships and more buy-in across partner organisations;
 - Ensuring that the new structures are simpler with less meetings so that it is more efficient for attendees and requiring less resources from CBC to support;
 - Ensuring that we are moving to joint-commissioning to meet a shared understanding of needs in Cheltenham and agreement on collective outcomes. (The CSP endorsed a borough-wide needs analysis in March 2011.)
- 1.4** As part of the final session, a draft partnership structure was proposed and was agreed by all participants. It has fewer partnerships and simplified governance arrangements; it appears to be flexible, outcomes focussed and has the potential to engage diverse groups.
- 1.5** The draft structure was endorsed for consultation purposes by Cheltenham Strategic Partnership at its meeting on 23rd June and a consultation document produced (see appendix A) to gain feedback on the proposals.

- 1.6 The closing date for comments was Friday 2 September. A summary of the issues and questions raised is brought to Economy and Business Improvement O&S for discussion (appendix B).

2. Next Steps

- 2.1 A CSP working group is reviewing consultation responses will draft a report on the way forward that will go to the CSP meeting on 29 September. Feedback from Economy and Business Improvement O+S will be into the report that goes to the council's Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 18th October.

Background Papers

Contact Officer

Richard Gibson, Policy and Partnerships
Manager, 01242 235354,
richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk

Accountability

Cllr. Steve Jordan, Leader of the Council

Scrutiny Function

Social and Community O&S

Economy and Business Improvement O&S

Attachments

**Appendix A - Improving partnership
structures for Cheltenham – a consultation
document**

**Appendix B - Summary of questions / issues
raised**