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Minutes of a meeting of the Bradford Community Legal Advice Service Partnership Board held on Wednesday 10 May 2006 at City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 1800
Concluded 1915

PRESENT –

Members of the Board

Nick Hodgkinson	Legal Services Commission	Legal Services Commission
Councillor Howard Middleton	Liberal Democrat	Bradford Council
Lynette Kirk	Manningham Project	Voluntary Sector
Zahida Mallard	Voting Co-opted Member	Bradford Council
Dave Preston	Community Funding Unit	Bradford Council
Andy Taylor	Bradford CAB	Voluntary Sector
George Scully	Bradford City Teaching PCT	Health Sector

Also present:

Sheila Farnhill	Secretary	Bradford Council
Sikander Hussain	Key House Project	Non-Voting Co-opted Member
John Prestage	Former Member	
Julie Robinson-Joyce	Community Funding Unit	Bradford Council

94. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Jan Curry, Liz Reveley and Sue Williscroft.

95. MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2006 be accepted as a correct record.



96. **MATTERS ARISING**

- (i) It was reported the Keighley One Stop Shop was expected to open sometime in June (Minute 89(vi)).
- (ii) Dave reported that he had written to Peter Nelson at the LSC in respect of this issue but, to date, had not received a response. He undertook to report back to a future meeting. (Minute 90).
- (iii) Dave explained that there were a number of practical issues that remained to be resolved with the LSC and he would report back in due course. Nick said that there were some legal issues that were under examination (Minute 92).
- (iv) Sheila reported apologies from the Catering Unit in respect of the quality of food provided at the last meeting. (Minute 93(ii)).

97. **CLS STRATEGY AND PREFERRED SUPPLIER CONSULTATION**

Nick tabled the consultation document and gave the Board a related briefing covering the following points:

- The Community Legal Service (CLS) Vision.
- The CLS Priorities.
These were aimed at providing the most efficient and effective assistance within the available resources.
- The CLS Strategy;
which covered a five year period. The most relevant aspect for the CLASP was improved co-ordination of work with local authorities.
- CLACs and CLANs.
- Engagement with Key Partners;
on a national, regional and local level.
- Community Legal Service Partnerships;
and an acknowledgement of their role.
- Future Work.

Nick explained that, by 2009, all contracts with specialist suppliers would be arranged through the preferred supplier process. The predicted benefits of this system were that it would be both cheaper and quicker for the client (there would be a reduced need for decisions to be referred up to the LSC) and that it would permit the introduction of simplified arrangements for billing and claiming. It would also allow a significant reduction to be made in the amount of inspection and auditing required. He explained that it was expected that, by 2009, the new process would lead to there being fewer suppliers overall but that they would be larger, cover more categories of law, and would be dealing with more clients than at present. He suggested that the use of a consortium model with a lead supplier would be an option for smaller suppliers.

Nick explained that further detail on the proposed procurement method would be available later in the year, following publication of the recommendations made by Lord Carter as part of his review.

The Board discussed the issues raised by the document, during which the following points were put forward:

- It was not known if there would be a set quota of suppliers from the not for profit sector but the consultation paper did include a section on the entry criteria for such agencies.
- The phrase “soundly financed and sustainable business” in the document could mean that an agency was required to have a realistic, costed business plan.
- Concerns were expressed in relation to the potential implications for small suppliers and the complications associated with the suggested consortia model, particularly for the lead agency.

NO ACTION

98. STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2006-2009

An updated version of the Board’s Strategy and Action Plan for 2006-2009 was tabled. This now reflected the conclusions of the discussion at the previous meeting.

Julie highlighted the main additions/amendments. She explained that the performance measures had been kept deliberately vague at this stage because of the potential financial implications.

It was agreed that the Advisory Sub-Group should look at the document in more detail at its next meeting (13 June). All members agreed to forward any comments to Julie, by the first week of June, for consideration by the Sub-Group. Julie undertook to e-mail the document to those members absent from the meeting.

ACTION: ALL

99. ADVISORY SUB-GROUP - PROGRESS REPORT

Julie tabled and went through the notes of the Sub-Group meeting held on 2 May 2006 (attached as Appendix 1). She explained that “DIVA” was the voluntary sector database.

She also tabled and went through a briefing note on the Social Policy issues that had been highlighted during January to March 2006 (attached as Appendix 2). She explained that the focus had been placed on cases which, it was believed, could have been prevented with more intervention.

It was noted that membership of the Sub-Group would need to be reviewed as John Prestage would no longer be a member.

ACTION: Clerk - to put on Agenda for the next meeting

100. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Dave reported that this would be the last meeting attended by Nick Hodgkinson and John Prestage. Mark Startin had also ceased to be a member of the Board following the local elections last week.

Dave paid tribute to the huge contribution that had been made, by both Nick and John, to the successful working of the Board. He presented tokens of thanks to both in recognition of their work. Appreciation was also expressed to Mark for his contribution over the previous 12 months. Nick and John expressed their thanks for the gifts and expressions of appreciation.

ACTION: *Clerk to contact Group Whips in relation to Councillor representation. Clerk to place item on Agenda for the next meeting in respect of a review of the Constitution (specifically in respect of membership).*

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Board.