

OXFORDSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD – 1 JULY 2010

REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIPS

Background

Last year we put new partnership governance arrangements in place. We are now starting to review whether these are effective. County Council scrutiny committees are also intending to review partnership effectiveness later this year.

Overall we have created the framework and conditions for people to work together on shared priorities. However joint working is not easy and there will always be areas where things are not going as well as we would like.

Key Issues

Inevitably some of these issues will now get entangled with new Government changes around economic development, housing, planning and education.

It is also probable that the government will, in time, modify the statutory framework for partnerships. Currently we are legally obliged to have partnerships for children and young people, health and well-being and community safety. Local Strategic Partnerships aren't statutory, although community strategies currently are, but there is a general duty to co-operate in the LAA.

At this stage it is difficult to anticipate how the Government will seek to change the nature of partnership working although the following are possible changes:

- More local choice about what joint working arrangements are required (regionally and locally).
- Local Area Agreements to be abandoned after 2010/11.
- Possibly some form of 'Total Place' initiative requiring partnership working to agree priorities and joined-up action and ensure co-operation, accountability and the pooling/rationalisation of resources.

Next Steps

In the light of the above it is proposed that discussions take place with partnerships over the next few months to consider achievements, strengths and areas for improvement and the likely implications of new government thinking about partnerships on our joint working arrangements.

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