

Report to: Oxfordshire Public Service Board. February 2008

Subject: Review of Structure and Governance - Scoping Paper

Introduction and background

At the last meeting of the Public Service Board on the 7th January it was reported that the Oxfordshire Local Authority Leaders had requested that the County and District Chief Executives undertake a review of the current existing structures and governance arrangements to ensure they are “fit for purpose” to deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA2 targets.

This report seeks to gain formal approval from the Public Services Board to undertake the review and agree its scope.

Scope of Review

The review is to cover all partnerships which have the potential to implement elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy and/or LAA2. This will include county-wide groups, district based groups and groups representing communities of interest as follows:

- Oxfordshire Partnership Board
- Oxfordshire Public Service Board
- District Local Strategic Partnerships
- Children’s and Young People’s Partnership / Board
- Health and Wellbeing Partnership
- Safer Communities Partnership and the District Crime Reduction Partnerships
- Oxfordshire Economic Partnership
- Learning and Skills Partnership
- Housing Partnership
- Supporting People
- Environment Partnership
- Waste Partnership
- Climate Change Working Group
- Voluntary Sector Development Partnership

The review will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the partnerships (including governance arrangements) in being able to meet the SCS priority themes and pledges and/or LAA agreed actions.

A simple audit of partnerships against agreed criteria will be undertaken. The audits need to be mindful of existing agreed governance arrangements and any existing stated or prescribed arrangements for statutory partnerships.

The audit will also include an estimate of the financial resources spent by partnerships including identifying how many posts are funded through the Area Based Grant and/or LAA pump-priming monies.

Initial findings will be reported to the Oxfordshire Local Authority Leaders meeting in March and the Public Service Board in April.

The report will identify some initial conclusions and proposed principles and criteria that might be adopted in considering a second phase of the project looking at future structures and arrangements.

Objectives of the Review

- To ensure effective and robust partnerships are in place to deliver on the SCS priorities and LAA targets.
- To ensure a strong focus on the issues and priorities identified by the Oxfordshire Partnership.
- To ensure a clear and accountable process for delivery of projects and reporting back on progress.
- To ensure governance arrangements are appropriate to the nature of the partnership.
- To advise on an appropriate process on the establishment or cessation of partnerships.
- To consider whether sufficient scrutiny arrangements are in place for expenditure of public funds.
- To consider whether capacity building is needed for partnerships to fulfil their potential.
- To advise on communication protocols between partnerships and partner organisations.

Timescales and Resources

Cherwell DC, West Oxfordshire DC, Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire CC have offered to complete the initial audits between them liaising with the appropriate lead officers for each of the Partnerships. Other Public Service Board partners are invited to join the project group to support the process.

Phase 1 – Audit and initial conclusions and findings should be completed by March 2008.

Report phase 1 findings to Oxfordshire Leaders, Public Service Board and Oxfordshire Partnership

Phase 2 – Proposed structure and partnership governance arrangements to be completed by July 2008

Phase 3 – Capacity building for agreed structure and support to improve delivery

Consultation and Communication

Regular liaison and feedback will need to be given to both the Oxfordshire Partnership and Public Services Board and key individual organisations such as the Police, PCT, OCC and District Councils. Subject to the approval from the Public Services Board all current partnerships included within the scope of this review should be notified of the review and its objectives and kept informed of progress at each stage of the process.

Recommendations

The Public Service Board is asked to:

- i. Approve the review of existing structures and governance arrangements as set out in the report

David Neudegg
Chief Executive
West Oxfordshire District Council
January 2008