
Community Well-being Board

09 May 2007

Local Government House, Smith Square, London

Chair: Cllr D Rogers OBE (East Sussex CC/Lewes DC)

Vice-Chair: Cllr G Barnard (Bracknell Forest)

Deputy Chair: Cllr David Beechey (Bridgnorth DC)

Deputy Chair: Cllr R Grant (Warwickshire)

Members: Cllr M Aspinall (Plymouth), Cllr E Atkinson (Poole UA), Cllr D Cousins (Isle of Wight), Cllr K Glazier (East Sussex CC), Cllr B Hood (Monmouthshire), Cllr R Lawrence (Wolverhampton UA), Cllr M Robinson (New Forest DC), Cllr S Whitaker (Norfolk CC)

Substitutes: Cllr P Banks (Hampshire CC), Cllr R McLaughlin (Hammersmith & Fulham)

Apologies: Cllr J Couchman (Oxfordshire), Cllr R Martins (Watford BC)

On behalf of the board, councillor David Rogers welcomed Anne McDonald to the meeting. Anne was currently working in the Department of Health and would be joining the LGA in June 2007 as a Programme Director with responsibility for the community and well-being agenda. Anne stated that she looked forward to working with members and officers in this challenging and interesting area.

1. Sector-led improvement in adult social services (Trish O'Flynn, Acting Programme Director and Mary Burguières, Senior Policy Consultant, LGA)

Trish O'Flynn, Acting Programme Director for community and well-being, introduced the report which had been developed following the Board's discussions on performance and improvement at the previous meeting in March. LGA Boards with service area responsibilities would take the lead in monitoring performance levels in the key service/outcome areas within their remit. CSCI had identified 21 authorities which needed to improve their adult social services as they were currently rated as one star, and a list of these authorities was tabled.

Mary Burguières, Senior Policy Consultant, advised that the community well-being board was the first board to discuss in-depth how it could work in partnership with the improvement board to help improve services in this way. Each service board had considerable expertise around its relevant service areas and it was hoped the boards would monitor relevant services and understand what practical help would most assist authorities to improve. The improvement board's role in this would be to monitor which authorities were receiving support in which service areas and steer the project as a whole, rather than give specialist service-specific advice.

In the course of the discussion, members made the following points:

- *It was important for the board to agree on how to assist authorities to improve adult social services in principle rather than focusing on individual authorities at this stage*
- *The board should work in partnership with the improvement board, avoiding duplication, and across political parties to maintain the enthusiasm to move this work forward*
- *The community well-being board had a breadth of knowledge and expertise which could be channelled to help authorities. In addition the experience the board gained from helping authorities improve their community well-being services would enhance its reputation in central government and give the board a stronger position to lobby from.*
- *It was important not to over-regulate and overburden the way that support was offered to local authorities. A policy-context framework should be offered to authorities to help them.*
- *There would need to be careful thought given as to whether support was offered only to those authorities requesting it or whether it would be offered where it was identified authorities could benefit from such support.*
- *There was a clear link between this area of work and the Best Commission- particularly regarding the need to increase communication channels between LGA member authorities so that best practice could be shared. A method of sharing best practice needed to be formalised to ensure that this happened.*
- *It was hoped that partnerships between authorities could be fostered, with strong performing authorities working with weaker ones*

Decision: *The Board noted the report and agreed to monitor progress in work undertaken at a future meeting.*

Action: *Officers to continue to develop work in this area in relation to the community well-being board.*

(TO'F/MB)

2. Findings of the Best Commission (Claire Holloway, Programme Director for Development, LGA)

Claire Holloway, Programme Director for Development, updated the Board on progress in responding to the findings of the Best Commission and the emerging priorities arising from Raising Our Game. Paul Coen was drawing up a prospectus which would draw together final responses to both of these and this would be published in late May. A paper had been emailed to members prior to the meeting and was also tabled. Claire drew the board's attention to annexe 1 which listed the LGA's initial responses to Best's recommendations. She asked the board for their views on the recommendations and initial responses and the following comments were noted:

- *There was concern that the recommendation of Sounding Boards drawn primarily from elected portfolio holders would mean fewer members could get involved in LGA business despite the aim of the recommendation being to increase participation from members. It was important the LGA response spelled out the need to involve all of its elected members' expertise, not just that of portfolio holders, or backbench councillors could feel ostracised.*

- *There was support for the recommendation to increase LGA meetings held outside of London as it was thought that this would help to involve members outside of London more fully.*
- *It was noted that the response to 'refocus' the LGA boards rather than set up new sounding boards was positive, and that the LGA needed to have a harder edged strategic approach when lobbying central government on issues of importance. However, members were concerned that boards would need sufficient support and capacity to carry out this role*
- *It was important to see that agreed recommendations and responses were implemented practically.*
- *Communication with local authorities was essential in order to increase member satisfaction with the LGA. Many members did not want to spend time in meetings at the LGA but would like to see information from such meetings communicated to them.*
- *It was recognised that duplication between IDeA and LGA needed to be addressed and information properly shared between the two bodies.*

Decision: *The Board noted the report.*

Action: *Officers to take forward the comments made to feed into the LGA's final response.*

(CH)

3. The Commissioning framework for health and well-being (Tim Hind, LGA Consultant)

Tim Hind, LGA Consultant, introduced the report on the commissioning framework consultation which set out key issues for local government and proposed responses to these. The Board was asked to comment on the above, and comments would be fed into the draft response to the consultation. The response would then be used to form the basis of the response from the Inter Agency Group for Adult Social Care. Key issues included ownership of the framework; practice based commissioning (PBC); resources; and the broader role of local government.

In the course of its discussion the board then made the following comments:

- *The different cultures and operational mechanisms of the NHS and local government, and the difficulty each had understanding the other, needed to be addressed in the response, as this was a major issue.*
- *It was essential to get the agreement of GPs and their professional body, the Royal College, on the framework concerning the alignment and integration of practice based commissioning (PBC), particularly around social care and public health.*
- *There was concern that although a robust response could be put forward by the LGA, this would not necessarily mean that the framework would be taken into account on a practical level.*
- *There was a general concern about resources and that the changes would not be cost neutral. Particular issues raised were: the cost of transition between reconfigured services, the recycling of savings in the acute sector as community and preventative services are rolled out, the perverse incentives of Payment by Results and the impact of deficits on pooled budgets. The time needed to decommission and re-commission*

services was longer than Government recognised. A tight CSR07 settlement would make it difficult for a large number of authorities to manage this.

- *The need for involvement of service users in the commissioning process should be made clear.*

Decision: *The board noted the report and agreed the consultation response.*

Action: *Officers to incorporate the board's comments into the draft response and circulate to members.* (TH)

4. Other Business Report

The Board discussed the feedback from meetings section of the report and the following comments were noted:

- *It was advised by Cllr Banks that Cllr Colston had attended a meeting of the South East Counties rather than the Government Office South East region meeting stated in the report.*
- *Cllr Barnard expanded on the meeting he had attended on LINks. There was still concern at the lack of detail and understanding on LINks.*
- *Cllr Aspinall advised that she had attended a presentation on the smoke-free legislation last week.*

Decision: *The Board noted the report.*

5. Update on Health and Social Care (David Behan, Director General for Social Care, Department of Health)

David Behan, Director General for Social Care gave a detailed presentation on health and social care, focusing on CSR2007; the future of social care and service transformation, and the health and well-being agenda.

For CSR07 David focused on the local services review; the cross-cutting review held in March; the performance framework and the March 2007 budget.

The reform of social care would be focused in four key areas: shaping and building the market; strengthening performance management; increasing capability and providing people shaping services.

The health and well-being agenda included opportunities around PCT reconfiguration; joint appointments; strategic needs assessments; as well as challenges around continuing care and NHS and local government commissioning of services.

The board then discussed the following issues:

- *The current mental health Act had been opposed by large numbers of service users and yet the government was still pressing ahead with it.*
- *There was concern about community consultation and the future of user-led organisations.*

- *Where there were reconfigured PCTs there was concern at delays in delivering effective management capacity.*
- *Users were aware that funds had been spent on improving the health service but had been disappointed with the results.*
- *There was concern both for the potential struggles faced by young carers which could be exacerbated by slow growth in government funding for adult services, as well as concern for the lack of support for adult carers.*
- *It was hoped that innovative schemes such as those established in POPPs pilots, would in future attract long term funding.*

David Behan advised the board that it was important to make evidence-based policy rather than policy-based evidence in order for proper success. The relationship between the national level and the local level needed to be thought through. His job was to set the policy strategy and framework in which to operate. Regular one-to-ones with Paul Coen were helping to cement the right relationships with local government and it was important to remain updated on what was going on at a local level. He stated that Economic Development units in local authorities should be supporting local people employed in the social care sector as it was probably around 10% of the population worked in this sector.

The board thanked David for his informative presentation.

6. Note of the Last Meeting

The Board agreed the note of the last meeting.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 11th July 2007