

**Meeting:** Integrated Housing Board

**Date:** 18 October 2011

**Report Title:** Review of Partnership Arrangements

**Report of:** Stuart Young, Assistant Chief Executive

### **Purpose**

This report presents the findings of the Haringey partnership review and the recommendations for the way forward.

### **Summary**

In April the council commissioned Shared Intelligence to carry out a review of its partnership arrangements. The review recommends a more streamlined approach to partnership working and engagement.

The report recommended that:

- The core partners should meet with Haringey Council's Cabinet and Chief Executive Management Board every six weeks and that this will constitute the core partnership group;
- Cabinet portfolio holders should have lead responsibility for political liaison with key partners;
- Initially the only standing partnership bodies should be the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board (sHWB) and a reconstituted Community Safety Board;
- The council should adopt a commissioning approach to the funding of voluntary sector infrastructure support in Haringey;
- Area committees and Haringey Debate council meetings should form the key elements of the more inclusive dimension of partnership working;
- The network of partnerships that currently sit below the thematic boards should be reviewed and streamlined;
- The shadow Health and Wellbeing Board should develop its role in relation to safeguarding and discharging the other functions of the current Children's Trust;
- Continuing attention should be paid to the culture of partnership working.

The summary of the Haringey Partnership Review is attached below, together with a position statement from the Leader of Haringey Council

### **Recommendations**

Outgoing Theme Boards should identify key actions and areas of work within their remit which may not be addressed in the new arrangements. These may

be picked up by task and finish groups or as part of partners core business.

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## **Haringey Partnership Review**

### **Summary of recommendations**

The report recommends that:

- The core partners should meet with Haringey Council's Cabinet and Corporate Management Team every six weeks and this will constitute the core partnership group;
- Cabinet portfolio holders should have lead responsibility for political liaison with key partners;
- Initially the only standing partnership bodies should be the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and a reconstituted Community Safety Board;
- The council should adopt a commissioning approach to the funding of voluntary sector infrastructure support in Haringey;
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- The network of partnerships that currently sit below the thematic boards should be reviewed and streamlined;
- The Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board should develop its role in relation to safeguarding and discharging the other functions of the current Children's Trust;
- Continuing attention should be paid to the culture of partnership working.

### **Introduction**

Haringey Council commissioned Shared Intelligence to carry out a review of its partnership arrangements. This report sets out the review findings and recommendations for future partnership working in Haringey.

### **Approach and methodology**

The starting point for the review was exploring:

- Which people and organisations the key local leaders in Haringey need to work with in order to fulfil their respective roles effectively;
- What inter-agency collaboration is necessary to deliver Haringey's strategic priorities;
- What partnership infrastructure is needed to support that dialogue and collaboration.

In pursuing this approach the following was undertaken:

- key senior officials in partner organisations were interviewed plus Chairs of the executive boards and the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council;
- Observed meetings of the Shadow Health and Well-being Board and the Safer Communities Executive Board;

- Held facilitated discussions with the HSP Executive and Standing Conference.

## **Findings**

There are widely shared views that:

- Dialogue and collaboration between the key agencies in Haringey is more important than ever, particularly in light of the budget reductions;
- Formal infrastructure is needed to support this dialogue and collaboration;
- A “core group” that needs to be engaged should comprise of the Council, the Police, the health service, Jobcentre Plus. Other partners would be asked to attend the core group as and when required;
- The current partnership arrangements are no longer fit for purpose. There are too many boards and sub-groups. Too many meetings rubber stamping decisions taken elsewhere. Concerns that most business is done outside formal partnership settings.
- Whilst the current structure provides a framework for informal contact, it has not created a culture in which there is sufficient communication and data-sharing.
- Senior officers from some partner organisations question the leadership role of politicians in some partnership groups.
- The voluntary and community sector has an important contribution to make and should be a key partner, but that we need to review how they are represented.
- Developing tighter links with the Area Committees and Area Forums is important.
- There is an absence of an effective business voice in Haringey.

## **Policy context**

A number of government policies need to be taken into account in considering the future of partnership in Haringey. The most significant is the proposed establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards. Haringey has already established a shadow board.

The Government has also indicated that it intends to legislate to put the safeguarding of vulnerable adults on the same footing as Local Children’s Safeguarding Boards. It also intends to remove the requirement on councils to establish Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

## **Principles for a new approach to partnership working**

It is recommended that a number of principles should underpin the new approach to partnership working in Haringey. The principles have been shaped in the light of the findings set out above.

The principles are that:

1. Partnership working becomes “the way we do things round here” with the minimum infrastructure necessary to marshal the resources of partner agencies.
2. Partnership working becomes an integral part of “mainstream” activity and:
  - a. Enables Cabinet members to provide a political steer and formal authorisation;

- b. A core group of partners to agree a strategic direction and to commission (and de-commission) partnership activity;
  - c. Use task and finish groups and ad hoc workshops wherever possible, with a minimum number of standing boards;
- 3. Arrangements are put in place to secure wider involvement in setting and reviewing the priorities for Haringey and, where relevant and appropriate, in partnership working.
- 4. Robust governance arrangements are put in place for effective joint working in relation to vulnerable adults and children's safeguarding, crime and disorder and emergency planning.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. The core partners should meet with Haringey Council's Cabinet and Corporate Management Team every six weeks to constitute the core partnership group**

This meeting will provide an opportunity for a collective discussion of the key issues facing Haringey involving Haringey's political and managerial leadership and the core partners. It enables a collective political steer to be given and provides a forum for key partners to contribute to the development and implementation of priorities for the borough.

This proposal builds on the current role of CAB meetings in Haringey which bring together the council's political and managerial leadership. It is important however these are not treated simply as "extended CAB" meetings, but develop a role and way of working of their own.

This group will provide the strategic direction for and receive updates from any standing partnership bodies such as the Health and Well-being Board and would commission task and finish group to pursue agreed priority areas.

The organisations which will be represented at these meetings are: health, police, and Job Centre Plus. Other partners will be invited as required. This Group should take place every six weeks, bi-monthly at the least. Care must be taken with planning the agendas of these meetings to ensure a partnership focus.

### **2. Cabinet portfolio holders should have lead responsibility for political liaison with key partners**

This proposal builds on the contacts many Cabinet members already have with key individuals in partner organisations and the value they place on their regular one-to-ones with senior officers. An explicit partnership role would complement Cabinet members' existing responsibilities. For example, lead partner officials being invited when appropriate to the member's 1-to-1 meetings with their lead officer(s). Other cabinet members would be encouraged to use the lead members as the initial conduit through which issues can be raised with partners.

### **3. Initially the only standing partnership bodies should be the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and a reconstituted Community Safety Board**

The shadow Health & Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Board should be in place at the outset. This will allow the following:

- The Wider Leadership Group would be able to consider on their merits any proposals to establish additional standing partnerships. This will only be where an adhoc group is not appropriate.
- More experience to be gained with the operation of the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board.

The importance of crime and community safety issues in Haringey warrant the retention of a reconstituted Community Safety Partnership. This group will have a significant operational role and we therefore recommend that the Cabinet member with this portfolio holder should be a member of the board, but in a constructive challenge role rather than as chair. It may be appropriate for this group to provide the governance arrangements for the MASH project.

#### **4. The council should build on its recently approved voluntary sector strategy and adopt a commissioning approach to the funding of voluntary sector infrastructure support in Haringey**

The presence of an effective voice for the voluntary and community sector in the proposed new arrangements is extremely important. The majority of people spoken to are not confident that the current arrangements are capable of securing that input. As with other areas, Haringey is implementing a commissioning approach to its relationship with the sector and we recommend that it should adopt a similar approach to the funding of voluntary sector infrastructure.

#### **5. A number of steps should be taken to secure a more inclusive contribution to partnership working in the borough**

Haringey Council's recent governance review recommended that 3 of the 5 council meetings each year should take the form of "Haringey Debates". These could be used as the main vehicle for securing a wider contribution to partnership working. For example:

- One of those meetings could take the form of an annual "state of the borough" debate to review and refresh the priorities for the borough as a whole;
- The other two meetings could be used to focus on the review or development of particular strategies, such as the Greenest Borough strategy.

The Area Committees could also play a useful role in securing a wider and bottom-up input to partnership working.

Area Committees may identify issues involving partner organisations which cannot be resolved at a local level. It is envisaged that the relevant Area Committee chair would raise the topic in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (which is now comprised of all the Area Committee chairs) with a view to the topic being:

- Referred to the relevant portfolio holder;
- Forming the topic for a scrutiny review; or
- Being referred to the Wider Leadership Group.

**6. The network of partnerships that currently sits “below” the Executive Boards should be reviewed, in a way which balances the need for a slimmer structure with the importance of collaboration and joint working**

It is understood that the Shadow Health Board Executive sees as one of its tasks undertaking a review of the large number of health-related partnerships. This would be beneficial and lessons learnt from this will inform a wider review of working partnership structures across the borough. This review should be completed by the end of December 2011.

**7. The Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board should develop proposals for its role in relation to safeguarding and discharging the other functions of the current Children’s Trust.**

This recommendation reflects:

- The lack of clarity nationally about the relationship between Health and Wellbeing Boards and Local Safeguarding Children Boards;
- The likelihood that councils will be required to establish Local Safeguarding Adults Boards;
- The need to review to what extent and how the shadow board should take on functions currently discharged by the Children’s Trust.

**8. Attention should be paid to the culture of partnership working in Haringey.**

The effectiveness of partnership working hinges far more on culture and ways of working than structures. This is particularly so in a borough such as Haringey. The recommendations in this review are intended to create the conditions in which a culture of partnership working develops further.

It is recommended that there is a review after 3 and 6 months of implementation of the new way of working.

## Appendix 1

### Haringey Strategic Partnership Position Statement August 2011

Partnership working is essential to make sure that we achieve the best possible outcomes for everyone who lives or works in Haringey. Given the challenges brought about by the current economic climate and the introduction of government policies that will change how local services are delivered, it is timely that the partnership arrangements are reviewed so that they reflect these new ways of working. The recent disturbances have made a review of partnership working even more crucial.

Haringey Council commissioned a wide ranging independent review which has now concluded and makes the following headline recommendations:

1. There should be a core partnership group that meets every six weeks. This will provide Haringey's political and managerial leadership the forum to discuss the key issues facing Haringey to ensure a collaborative approach.
2. The only standing partnership bodies will be the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and a reconstituted Community Safety Board.
3. Task and finish groups will be commissioned to undertake specific pieces of work to deliver partnership objectives.

The attached summary report details the recommendations.

It is intended that the autumn round of theme boards will meet to be briefed about the review, identify key pieces of work that will need to be completed by the task and finish group approach, and plan for the implementation of the review.

Given the reduced resources that affect all partner organisations, I believe this new approach gives us the opportunity to create the conditions in which partnership working becomes the norm, with the minimum infrastructure necessary that will allow partners to support the delivery of our shared priorities.

Cllr Claire Kober, Leader of Haringey Council  
Chair of Haringey Strategic Partnership

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