

Agenda

DATE: Thursday 2nd April 2009
 TIME: 2.00 pm
 PLACE: Barnfield College, New Bedford Road campus
 (NOTE VENUE)

Minute Taker:

Lisa Jerome

Quorum: Thirteen Members

Item	Subject:	Page No	Time
1	Apologies for absence	Verbal	2.00
2	Minutes of the meeting 29 th January 2009	Pages 2-7	2.05
2a	Matters Arising	8	
3	<p>Disclosures of Interests</p> <p><i>Members are reminded that they must disclose both the existence and the nature of any personal interest that they may have in any matter to be considered at this meeting.</i></p> <p><i>A member with a personal interest in any matter to be considered at this meeting will also have a prejudicial interest in the matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the individual's judgement of the public interest. A member who has a prejudicial interest must withdraw from the meeting room while the matter is being discussed.</i></p>	Verbal	
5	Local Area Agreement	Pages 9-30	2.15
6	Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy	Pages 31-34	2.25
7	Skills Agenda	Verbal	2.35
8	Update from Thematic Partnerships	Verbal	3.30
9	Local Strategic Partnership Manager's Report	Pages 35-39	3.45
10	Any Other Urgent Business with the Prior Agreement of the Chair		3.55

Contact for this agenda:

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LUTON FORUM MEETING

Thursday 29th January 2009
2.00 pm at The Hat Factory, 65-67 Bute Street, Luton

PRESENT: MEMBERS

Councillor Hazel Simmons – Luton Borough Council – Chair
Councillor David Franks
Andy Calvert – Luton Assembly – Vice-Chair
Linda Farrell – Luton Assembly
Lorna Brown – Luton Assembly
David Oakley-Hill – Luton Assembly
Neville White MBE – Luton Assembly
Jenny Spouge – Luton Assembly
Jo Baty – Learning and Skills Council
Everton Blake – Voluntary Action

SUBSTITUTES FOR MEMBERS

Laura Church substitute for Colin Chick (Environment and Economy Board)
Richard Collyer substitute for Richard Lacy (The Chamber)
Graeme Kent substitute for Helen Barnett (Active Luton)
Jenny Williams substitute for Debbie Jones (Children's Trust Board)

OBSERVERS

Peter Headland – Consultation Manager, Luton Borough Council
Margaret Moran MP
Nigel Smith – Comprehensive Area Assessment

SUPPORT OFFICERS/ADVISORS

Bren McGowan – LSP Manager, Luton Borough Council
Alice Abida – LSP Support Officer, Luton Borough Council
Lisa Jerome – Democratic Services, Luton Borough Council

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Penny Furness-Smith (Health and Wellbeing Board), Kevin Crompton (Chief Executive, Luton Borough Council), Katherine Govier (Bedfordshire Police Authority), Angela McNab (NHS Luton), Helen Barnett (Active Luton), Colin Chick (Chair of the Environment and Economy Board), Simon Barker (Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service), Tracy Costello (Jobcentre Plus), Councillor Roy Davis (Luton Borough Council), Adam Diveny and Simon Earles (London Luton Airport), Andy Frost

(Bedfordshire Police), Gerry Taylor (Director of Public Health), Debbie Jones (Chair of the Children's Trust Board), Wendy Gray (Luton Assembly), David Barrett (University of Bedfordshire), Richard Lacy (The Chamber), Lysle Osbourne (Marsh farm Community Development Trust), Rumi Chowdhury (Luton Assembly), Joycelyn Bullock (Luton Assembly), Anwar Haque (Luton Assembly).

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4th DECEMBER 2008 (REF: 2)

The Chair, on behalf of the Luton Forum congratulated Wendy Gray from the Luton Assembly on receiving the Mayor's Award for Citizenship.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Luton Forum held on 4th December 2008 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 MATTERS ARISING (REF 2b)

Core Strategy

The LSP Manager advised that the vision and objectives drafted and agreed at the Joint Transport and Planning Committee would be part of a six-week consultation on the Core Strategy which would take place during April and May.

David Oakley-Hill commented that this would be at the same time as the consultation and exhibition on the Town Centre. Members of the Forum were not aware of the exhibition and officers agreed to look into this matter and come back to the Forum with further details.

Multi Area Agreement

The LSP Manager advised that the development of Multi Area Agreements had been discussed at the Local Public Service Board meeting in December. Further consultation was taking place on how these Agreements might be developed.

Concern was expressed regarding how the voluntary and community sector would be represented. Officers advised that the Local Strategic Partnership had a place on the Board and that membership would be reviewed to ensure representation from all sectors.

4. LUTON ASSEMBLY RESTRUCTURE

Jenny Spouge, Luton Assembly, gave a presentation on the restructure of the Assembly and outlined the present and proposed new structure.

The Assembly's vision for the future was to base the structure around the four theme groups of Children and Young People, Environment and Economy, Health and Wellbeing and Stronger and Safer. Three representatives from each of the four themes would then have a place on the Assembly Committee along with the Chair and Vice-Chair making 14 members in total.

Jenny advised that one of the major areas of concern of Assembly members was the amount of meetings representatives had to attend. To address this issue, a 'Pyramid of Involvement' had been established allowing members to have a bronze, silver or gold level of involvement:

- Bronze: 'I haven't got the time to attend any more meetings, I want to receive the information only'.
- Silver: 'I have some spare time and would like to receive the information and attend some events and meetings'.
- Gold: 'I want to get fully involved, attend most meetings and consider becoming an Assembly Representative'.

Emerging issues for the Assembly and Luton as a whole were then considered:

- Central Government's Devolution programme
- The White Paper '*Communities in control: real people, real power*' aims to pass power into the hands of local communities and individual citizens.
- Luton is responding by changing the way they work at a local level
- Neighbourhood management presently being piloted in the West area of Luton
- Assembly new structure will enable better working within the 5 areas but may need reviewing at a later date
- A joint Community Empowerment Strategy could be the way forward.

Councillor Simmons thanked Jenny for her presentation and agreed that the number and timing of meetings was an issue for many people. It was agreed that the theme groups should consider these issues at their meetings.

5 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The LSP Manager submitted a report informing members of progress in the refresh of the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The meeting was informed that it was not proposed to add to, or remove any indicators from the LAA, although amendments were proposed to a number of targets which were still in the progress of negotiation and could not be

confirmed. The revised LAA was scheduled to be presented to Luton Borough Council in March for agreement prior to submission to Government Office.

The LSP Manager tabled supplementary information relating to a number of indicators where further information was awaited and the reasons why that information was not available. As negotiations were ongoing with the Government Office it was suggested that authority be delegated to approve any further amendments to the LAA.

Resolved: that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Forum in consultation with the Chief Executive of Luton Borough Council be delegated authority to incorporate any further amendments to the LAA as required on behalf of the Luton Forum.

6 COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

Nigel Smith, Comprehensive Area Assessment Lead for the Audit Commission, gave a presentation to the Forum on the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the key issues for Luton. Nigel advised that the aim of the CAA was:

- to give people a snapshot of life in their local area each year,
- to help local services improve quality of life in their area, and
- to provide an independent view of whether people were getting value for money from their local services.

The meeting was informed that the CAA judgements would be reported annually in November each year and would include clickable maps and postcode entry, narrative for services with red flags where action was needed to deliver priority improvements and green flags for exceptionally good prospects/promising innovations. There would also be links to other public bodies including Councils, PCT's, schools, police and fire authorities.

An outline of the timescales of CAA was reported with the draft report being developed later in the year with a view to publishing the report in November 2009.

A member of the Forum commented that much of the information proposed to be gathered for CAA purposes was already available and asked if it could be explained to the meeting how this extra process would add value to the outcomes and priorities already identified for Luton. In response, Nigel advised that all the information currently available would be co-ordinated to ensure there was clear

public reporting. The information gathered as part of the CAA process would be less about inputs and historic data but would be a live assessment of the local area.

Concern was expressed regarding the lack of reference to the Voluntary and Community Sector in the CAA process. Nigel confirmed that all sectors would be involved in the process and that he was keen to speak to the Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure that their key issues and priorities were addressed.

In response to a question, members were advised that in terms of the ability to challenge the information, there was a collective quality assurance process in place across the country and that all findings would be shared with partner organisations before publication of the report.

7 REPORT FROM THEMATIC BLOCKS

Children and Young People

Jo Baty, Learning and Skills Council advised that Children Services was undertaking a restructuring into neighbourhood teams to be implemented from 1st April 2009. A refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan would also take place in the Autumn.

Health and Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy was to be drafted to be aligned with the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Board would also be looking at the Cultural Strategy.

Safer and Stronger

In relation to the 'Stronger' aspect, the Board was looking at community engagement, equalities and neighbourhood governance. The Forum was advised that work was being planned to develop the 'stronger' aspect of this theme. Members of the Assembly expressed concern about how they would be involved in this process

Environment and Economy

The Climate Change Team had been talking to partners about how to manage climate change in Luton, including the implications of extreme weather.

Laura Church, Head of Regeneration reported that the Economic Participation Programme (previously Investing in Communities) would now be managed by the Regeneration Service, Luton Borough Council. Funding would be available for one year only and the Environment and Economy Board would agree the process for organisations to access funding directly.

Luton Assembly

The main update for the Assembly was the restructuring (item 4 refers).

Social Inclusion and Cohesion

The Board had met early in December and further meetings were to be arranged to consider how this work could link into the four thematic blocks.

The Chair thanked all those present who had reported back on the work of the Theme Boards. She expressed concern regarding the number of Chairs unavailable to attend this meeting and suggested that a written report from them on the work of their boards should be submitted to future meetings of the Forum.

8 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MANAGER'S REPORT

The Local Strategic Partnership Manager updated Members on issues relating to the Luton Forum.

The Local Public Service Board (LPSB) had agreed the establishment of a Housing Forum which would have a direct report through the Environment and Economy Board and would also feed information into other thematic partnerships as appropriate.

The LPSB had received a presentation on Marsh Farm Community Development Trust with a focus on sustaining the benefits of the programme. Members were advised that this had been referred to the Luton Assembly for information.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and in particular thanked Jo Baty from the Learning and Skills Council who was attending her last meeting, for her work and commitment to the Luton Forum. A number of other members also expressed their thanks to Jo.

(Note: the meeting ended at 3.45 pm)

LUTON FORUM	AGENDA ITEM
DATE OF MEETING:	2 April 2009
REPORT AUTHOR:	Geoff Bocutt, Director of Scrutiny, Luton Borough Council
SUBJECT:	Local Area Agreement

PURPOSE: To inform the Luton Forum of the progress in the review and refresh of the Local Area Agreement.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Luton Forum notes the progress made in the review and refresh of the Local Area Agreement

BACKGROUND:

1. Work has been taking place to update the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and to ensure that any gaps can be filled. Where appropriate, further negotiation has taken place over specific targets. The Luton Forum agreed a delegation to the Chief Executive of Luton Borough Council and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Luton Forum to agree any further amendments.

REPORT:

2. A report was presented to Luton Borough Council, as accountable body, on Monday 16 March. The draft was approved, with further amendments possible after consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive of Luton Borough Council and the Vice Chair of the Luton Forum. The final draft was sent to Government Office on 26 March for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government on 27 March.
3. Attention is drawn to the following:

- NI 054 (services for disabled children) is not included for calculation of the reward element. The baseline for this indicator will not be available until May 2009.
 - NI 121 (mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75) has replaced NI 137 (healthy life expectancy at 65). There has been a change in the way NI 137 is calculated, from using the Place Survey to using the census, and it has been agreed that NI 121 provides a more practical measure.
3. A copy of the final draft is attached for information.

LUTON FORUM	AGENDA ITEM
DATE OF MEETING:	2 April 2009
REPORT AUTHOR:	Peter Headland, Consultation and Community Engagement Manager, Luton Borough Council
SUBJECT:	Developing a Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy

PURPOSE: To inform the Luton Forum on proposals for developing a Comprehensive Engagement Strategy, seeking their comments and support.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Luton Forum supports the setting up of a project team from all the main partners to develop a comprehensive engagement strategy

That the Luton Forum considers and comments on the overall project timescales

BACKGROUND:

1. Public sector organisations have duties to involve, consult and inform, and soon to promote democracy¹. With Comprehensive Area Assessment the emphasis is on place, partnership and community engagement.
2. There is a need:
 - for a more co-ordinated approach between partners avoiding consultation fatigue
 - to avoid the past when engagement has focused too much on “service users” rather than “residents of an area” – the importance of sharing “customer insight” information between partners

¹ Local Government white paper “Communities in Control”/Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill 2009/ Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

- to identify a number of issues where consultation and community engagement can really make a difference with clear outcomes (acknowledging that partners and the partnership should not consult on everything)
- to have awareness of most people's preferred methods for involvement (which are not attending regular meetings)
- to dovetail with Neighbourhood Governance pilot and participatory budgeting
- for a fresh approach to engagement on equalities and diversity issues

REPORT

3. It is proposed that a Community Engagement Strategy should include the following:
 - (i) "Where are we now?"
(mapping of activities and structures, cost/benefit analysis, resources, performance and attitudes)
 - (ii) "Where do we want to get to?"
(national policy, SCS, values/principles, roles and responsibilities)
 - (iii) "How do we get there?"
(shared priorities/targets and success measures, added value/efficiency, joint activity/structures, review)
4. While writing a strategy is relatively straightforward to do, all partners will need to be convinced of the benefits (and reassured the strategy becomes a reality rather than a paper exercise). The strategy should be flexible and not a constraint – it should be regarded as supportive for example through frameworks, toolkits, training, shared databases of consultation.
5. The mapping exercise should take into account a value for money assessment of existing consultation and engagement across partners – however at the same time it will be important not to get bogged down with this.
6. The development of a Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy would have the following benefits:
 - Improved service delivery
 - Reduced inefficiency/duplication – Value For Money
 - Better intelligence
 - Increased citizen satisfaction
 - Improved accountability
 - Stronger links between communities and decision makers
 - Bottom up approach
 - Stronger partnership
 - Improved CAA ratings
 - Improved outcomes for local people

NEXT STEPS

7. A draft project plan is attached and it is recommended that this be progressed through a project team reporting to the LPSB.
8. The plan includes two cycles on consultation with the public and stakeholders, firstly on the existing engagement methods and, secondly on a new draft strategy.
9. This proposal has been presented to the Luton Assembly (17 March) and the Local Public Service Board (19 March). There is broad support for the proposal, with partners looking to identify key officers in their organisations who will be able to support this work. The two meetings also highlighted:
 - the need to dovetail this with the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the neighbourhood governance pilot and a smarter approach to equalities engagement
 - the importance of progressing the initiative as a partnership
 - the opportunity to consider social marketing as part of the approach.

LUTON FORUM	AGENDA ITEM 7
DATE OF MEETING:	2 April 2009
REPORT AUTHOR:	Mike Harrison
SUBJECT:	A Luton-wide approach to literacy

PURPOSE: The purpose of this paper is to provoke discussion among local strategic partners as a prelude to the development of a town-wide literacy strategy.

RECOMMENDATION: The Luton Forum is recommended to support the development of a town-wide Literacy Strategy

REPORT

1. *“Literacy is not just a matter for the Director of Children’s Services, it’s a matter for the whole council. It’s critical to social mobility, regeneration, social cohesion and democracy.”* Terry Piggott, Executive Director, Children & Young People’s Services, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

What do we mean by literacy?

2. The word ‘literacy’ is commonly expanded to embrace other skill sets, such as computer literacy, emotional literacy or social literacy. When we talk about literacy, some of these other connections may well come into play, but our primary focus is on communication, conversation and reflection, expressed through the media of speaking, listening, reading and writing.
3. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has drafted the following definition: “Literacy’ is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to

develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society."

4. In order to provide opportunities for people to develop their ability to read, write, spell, listen, and speak we need to operate in as wide a range of contexts as possible and in different environments. The classroom is only one such environment and formal education is only one such context. In Luton, Luton Borough Council is committed to improving levels of literacy across the town in a wide range of environments and contexts, and wants to work with all partners on this.

The challenge

5. Literacy is the door through which we access many of life's opportunities and pleasures.
 - People with low levels of literacy are more likely to experience poverty, disadvantage, relative powerlessness, and ill-health and research shows there is a strong link between low levels of literacy and criminality.
 - People with low levels of literacy find school difficult, experience frustration and can be misunderstood.
 - They are likely to have few qualifications and find that there is a cap on their ambition, holding them back from achieving the successes that others achieve.
6. A recent report² demonstrates that from an early age, for those with Entry level skills in literacy and numeracy, obstacles against getting on to the achievement track keep accumulating over time, making progression in education and employment increasingly difficult. What matters then is whether the individual's relationships, family, community and workplace reinforce the difficulties or supply the support needed to overcome them. Our challenge is to supply this support.

What the data shows.

7. We have specific information about English results, with a breakdown for reading and writing in Key Stage 1, but we have only anecdotal information telling us that many pupils could do so much better if their literacy skills could be improved. In particular, far more pupils could achieve the higher grades where a more sophisticated understanding is required, not just of grammar and vocabulary but in terms of the way meaning is conveyed through nuance, implication, irony, understatement, and so on.

², '*Illuminating disadvantage: Profiling the experiences of adults with Entry level literacy or numeracy over the lifecourse*' - The National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy

2008 results	LA	England	Quartile Band
Key Stage 1 L2+			
Reading	84	84	C
Writing	81	80	B
Key Stage 2 L4+			
English	77	81	D
Key Stage 3	No data		
Key Stage 4			
5+ A*-C (EM)	44.6	47.9	C
5+ A*-C	61.0	63.7	C

8. Broadly, the picture above seems to show average performance in the early stages of education, with the gap widening over time to below average performance.
9. The Foundation profile shows that boys and girls of nursery age are broadly average in Language for Communication and Thinking, and for Linking Sounds and Letters. However, when it comes to Reading and Writing, the performance of boys and girls is several points below the national average. This gap is widest for boys' writing, which is 10 points below the national figure of 52.
10. In Key Stage 2, comparative data places the local authority in the bottom quartile, not just overall, but for each one of its 24 indicators relating to performance in English.
11. There is a disparity between boys and girls, also reflected in the national figures, with only 41.2% of boys achieving the standard, while 48.2% of girls achieved the standard.
12. In 2007 the percentage of adults in Luton educated to Level 2 or above (equivalent to 5 GCSEs at A*-C) was 55.9%. This means that more than 44% of adults have Level One skills or lower, one of the lowest levels in the Eastern region.
13. Luton's young people have been making good progress over recent years, with a positive trajectory of improvement. The national average is within grasp. We aspire to reach this and then to exceed it over coming years.

The benefits of raising standards of literacy

14. People with higher levels of literacy are more likely to be better educated, better off, more mobile, able to manage their lives more expertly, and capable of higher levels of understanding and job satisfaction. They have higher self-esteem and make a significant contribution to the community and to society. Higher levels of literacy also contribute to community cohesion and to more equal opportunities for all.
15. Research shows that people who reach Level 2 (i.e. equivalent to an A-C grade at GCSE) or more in literacy are:
 - Less likely to live on benefits
 - More likely to live in a working household
 - More likely to own their own home
 - More likely to vote and be involved in their community
 - More likely to trust people and feel safe in their community
16. A literate community is therefore less dependent on the services provided by the council.

What needs to be done?

17. There are two broad sweeps of work that need to be tackled:
 - The first is to enhance support systems that help improve the literacy development of those who are behind or in danger of falling behind – to close the gap between the disadvantaged and the rest so that, wherever possible, underachievement is not compounded year on year.
 - The second is to establish a Luton-wide culture in which the profile of literacy is raised, promoted and celebrated, so that standards are raised overall.
18. This suggests the development of a town-wide, coherent approach to literacy that proclaims its importance to individuals and to the community, reinforcing this message wherever possible in all aspects of the work of partner organisations. This involves:
 - The development of a town-wide strategy and action plan, identifying and involving all relevant partners.
 - The identification of potential partners in business and industry and potential funding streams.
 - A strengthening of family literacy support.

- Training and awareness sessions for all relevant staff.
- An effective signposting scheme that enables staff and partners to refer customers/members of the public to relevant training and learning opportunities.
- The development of practical schemes that promote a widespread interest in and valuing of reading, such as a Luton-wide reading buddy scheme.
- Planning for a year-long campaign to improve literacy at every level.
- Harnessing the potential within individuals and departments to widen their contribution to literacy within the service and across the town.
- Highlighting what is already going on and working well, and exploit the potential that exists currently in Luton. For example, planning for a conference of all partners to raise awareness, to acquaint people with the resources and opportunities available and to promote effective practice.

How partners can contribute

- Talk to your colleagues and encourage them to propose ideas and become involved.
- Contribute to an awareness campaign among staff and in the public arena about the value of improving children's and adults' literacy, signposting the opportunities for support and training.
- Help us to identify individuals and teams who are already contributing to literacy development; to map existing support for family involvement with literacy and identify the priority groups and outcomes in this area that the local authority needs to focus on.
- Ensure that teams are alert to the links between the services they provide and the literacy needs of their clients. (If we are working with a family with many difficulties, it is likely that poor literacy will be a contributing factor. A package of coordinated support for this family may well include literacy.)
- Enable staff to participate in training and to support literacy schemes (e.g. reading buddies; reading champions; activities in libraries, schools, young offenders institutions, crèches, and so forth.)
- Consider how in the teams under your leadership enhanced support for literacy might promote the ambitions Luton has set for itself and consider too how this emphasis might promote Luton's priorities: *Stronger and Safer, Health and Well-being; Children and Young People; Economy and Environment.*

Process and Timescale

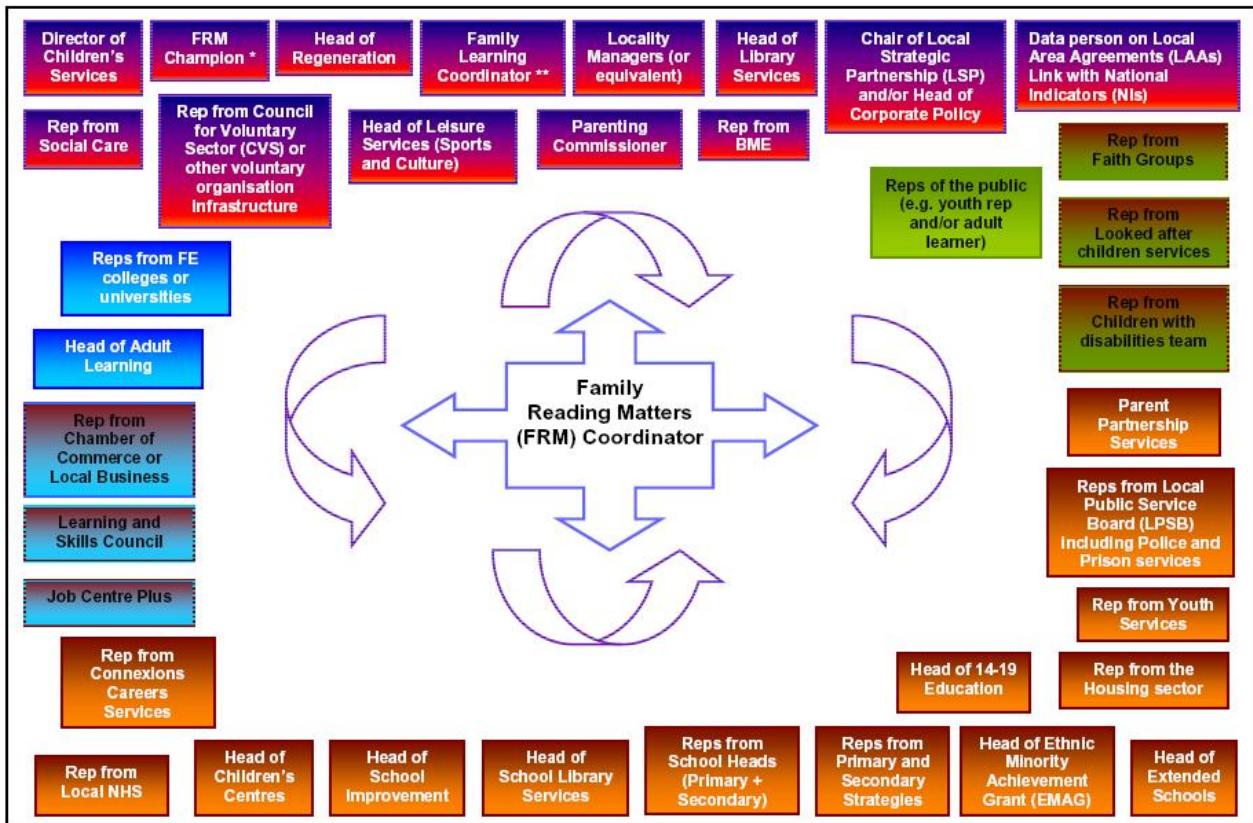
1st phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ mapping current provision ○ identifying partners and funding streams ○ producing strategy and action plan ○ etc 	6 months
2nd phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ staff training ○ launch conference ○ roll-out of the programme 	To be agreed with partners
3rd phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ launch of Luton-wide campaign ○ continued training ○ evaluation 	2010

Expected outcomes

19. The following benefits are expected:
- a. An improvement in literacy standards within the community (pre-school, school and post-school age) and a reduction in the numbers of people with low levels of literacy. This implies:
 - a concentration on EAL (English as an Additional Language);
 - identification and support from pre-natal onwards of literacy needs;
 - additional support in early years and in school settings for those who are showing signs of falling behind in early language acquisition and at the critical stages such as transition and transfer.
 - b. The overt signposting within institutions and the community as a whole of the opportunities that exist for adults and young people to improve their standards through additional opportunities for education and training.
 - c. The availability of a volunteer work-force of reading buddies and mentors able and willing to provide coaching and other support.
 - d. The acceptance by all partner organisations that they can take a part, however small, in helping others to develop their skills.

- e. Visual evidence across the town of the mantra that literacy matters, that families can do much to support children in their learning, that reading to babies and children is of massive benefit to them, that literacy skills enhance opportunities in adult life.

From *Family Reading Matters* - potential partnerships



* At least assistant Chief Executive or Director's level
 ** Link with Skills for Life

Positive and negative influences on individual learners

From *Literacy and Social Inclusion: The policy challenge – a discussion paper*.

Viv Bird, The National Literacy Trust

Additional information from recent research

- The Government's literacy strategy mainly focused on improving the teaching of literacy in schools, with some significant results. However, progress has plateaued in recent years.
- Children's literacy learning begins long before they start school - intervention in the early years (0-5) is critical to their literacy development.
- Research indicates that supporting literacy in the home will be key to further progress.
- Research shows that parental involvement is central to a child's literacy development. Parental involvement positively affects children's academic performance and is a more powerful force for academic success than other family background variables, such as social class, family size and level of parental education.
- Parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people through supporting their learning in the home rather than supporting activities in school. It is their support of learning within the home environment that makes the maximum difference to achievement.
- The earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more profound the results and the longer-lasting the effects. Early intervention is crucial because learning begins in the family long before children start school.
- What parents do with their children is more important than who parents are.
- Intergenerational transfer of literacy skills does take place and its impact is strong, especially when parents' literacy levels are low (below Level 1).
- Typically, only about 4% of parents involved in family literacy programmes are fathers.
- Parents with lower literacy levels are less likely to help their children with reading and writing and feel less confident in doing so.

January 2009

Mike Harrison (Acting Chief Adviser)
Fiona Marriott (Principal Librarian)

LUTON FORUM	AGENDA ITEM
DATE OF MEETING:	2 April 2009
REPORT AUTHOR:	Bren McGowan, LSP Manager
SUBJECT:	Partnership Manager's Report

PURPOSE:

1. To update members on general issues relating to the Luton Forum.

RECOMMENDATION:

2. **The Luton Forum is recommended to note this report.**

REPORT

3. **Local Improvement Advisors** – Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are able to access support from Local Improvement Advisors (LIAs) through Improvement East, the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. The LIAs are intended to support LSPs to develop their own solutions rather than simply undertake work on their behalf. A briefing note is attached to this report.
4. **LSP and LAA Practitioner's Group** – This group provides input from LSP and Local Area Agreement (LAA) leads into the programme of support for LSPs from Improvement East. Details of the Skills and Worklessness sub-regional seminar (6 May) have already been circulated to members. The attached briefing note updates members on the work of the Practitioner's Group, highlighting the current priority areas:
 - Climate Change
 - Community Cohesion
 - Community Empowerment
 - Skills and Worklessness.

5. **Communications** – A working group is being set up to look at both communications within the LSP and how it communicates with organisations and the general public. This will include representation from the Thematic blocks and from the Luton Assembly.

Briefing Note: LSP/LAA/MAA Practitioner Group 6th March 2009

Business engagement with LSPs – Linda Bubb (GO-East) talked to the group about issues relating to LSPs working with the business sector. Some good ideas came from the group about working on specific issues and with particular sectors on focused activity and that this was felt to be more useful engagement all round.

Festival of Ideas – John Craig from Innovation Exchange (www.innovation-exchange.org) came to the meeting to talk about the idea of running a Festival of Ideas within the region. He outlined what a festival would look like and the opportunities for linking public sector and LSP colleagues with community and social enterprise sectors to spark innovation and ideas. After consideration of our priorities and feedback on progress against them it was agreed that Skills and Worklessness would be targeted for a festival. Improvement East and the Innovation Exchange would fund the event. It was felt that it would be useful to hold it after the Innovation workshops currently being organised by Alex and that information may come from those workshops that would add to the Festival. A task and finish group consisting of Gillian Connolly, Alex Stewart and Ben Wood (Hertfordshire) agreed to work with John to support delivery of the Festival.

Priorities

Community empowerment – the action plan is expected next week from the Community Empowerment Partnership. We agreed that Practitioner colleagues would consult more widely within their LSP areas and with community empowerment colleagues and feedback comments to Clair Harvey.

Skills and Worklessness – Alex Stewart updated the group. There had been approval from the Strategic Group for the Skills innovation workshops.

Community Cohesion – Hannah Shah gave an update. In a short period of time there has been established a work programme and a steering group, which were well linked. The three priorities were;

- Sharing good practice
- Improving communications, and
- The effects of the economic downturn on community cohesion.

Climate Change – a briefing from Eve Dewsnap had been produced but not picked up for the meeting and as a result it was agreed to circulate this with the minutes and talk in more detail at the next meeting about climate change.

Next Network event – it was agreed that at the next event “Next Steps” would be progressed and some of the projects that the Practitioners Group are overseeing would be presented in more detail. Hertfordshire and Peterborough projects were the examples suggested.

Programme Update

The Group noted that a team of five Local Improvement Advisers will be collating and analysing the wealth of information that has been produced over the last few months in terms of LSP capacity (particularly in respect of District LSPs from the A2P project; the GO in respect of the County and Unitary LSPs) and LAA delivery issues. This work will include talking to the County and Unitary LSP Chairs. An independent evaluation of the A2P project

will also be undertaken. Together this work will form the backbone of the development of the work programme for 2009/10.

Strategic Group meetings – there is to be an additional Strategic Group meeting in April 2009 to debate issues relating to the development of the Delivery plan for 2009/10.

The next meeting of the **Practitioner Group** is to be held on the 1st June 2009. The agenda for that meeting will include a discussion about a future Chair as Gordon Johnston will be retiring in June/July 2009.

Please note that the Improvement East representative, Lucy Ashwell, is shortly going on maternity leave. Gillian Connolly will cover Lucy's role until further notice and her contact details are gillian.connolly@eera.gov.uk

This note will be available at www.improvementeast.gov.uk under the LAA/LSP theme.