



AGMA
ASSOCIATION OF
GREATER MANCHESTER
AUTHORITIES

MINUTES OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION MEETING – WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2009

PRESENT:

Cllr Bernard Priest, Manchester CC (Chair)
Cllr David Lancaster, Salford CC
Cllr Fred Walker, Wigan Council
Cllr Greg Couzens, Rochdale MBC
Cllr John Pantall, Stockport MBC
Joyce Redfearn, Chief Executive, Wigan Council
Roger Ellis, Chief Executive, Rochdale MBC
Emma Alexander, Executive Director, Performance, Capacity and Services, Oldham Council
Steve Houston, Corporate Director, Business Services, Stockport MBC
Ruth Hunter, Rochdale MBC
David Winstanley, Tameside MBC
Sue Johnson, Deputy Chief Executive, Wigan Council
Joanne Horrocks, Deputy, AGMA Policy and Research Unit
Cynthia Thompson, AGMA Collaborative Efficiency Programme Office
Theresa Grant, Corporate Director of Transformation and Resources, Trafford Council
Ian Claydon-Butler, Director, Strategic Procurement Hub, Trafford Council
Elaine Bowker, Strategic Director, Manchester Improvement Programme, Manchester CC
Margaret Green, Policy Support Officer, AGMA Policy and Research Unit

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Keith Swift, Rochdale MBC, Cllr Joe Kitchen and Cllr John Taylor, Tameside MBC, Cllr Alex Williams, Trafford Council, Cllr Linda Thomas, Bolton Council, Cllr Jackie Stanton, Oldham Council, Cllr Shan Alexander, Stockport MBC, Cllr Jack Walton, Bury Council, Megan Nurse, Assistant Chief Executive, Tameside MBC, Steven Pleasant, Chief Executive, Tameside MBC, Mike Kelly, Deputy Chief Executive, Bury Council, Andrew Donaldson, Assistant Director, Policy, Improvement and Area Working, Bolton Council and Mark Holden, Capacity Building & Change Manager, AGMA Policy and Research Unit.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION MEETING – 28 JULY 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2009 were approved as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM – GROUP DISCUSSION ON ROLE IN THE FIRST YEAR FOR THE COMMISSION AND FUTURE WORKING

A discussion/reflection session took place around what the Commission was hoping to achieve using the Commission's Terms of Reference as a base for the discussion. Councillor Priest pointed out that at the first meeting of the Commission a year ago Members saw their role as one of developing ways in which AGMA could be more effective and improve value for money.

Although it was felt the Commission had made some progress, it was agreed there was a need to raise ambitions and possibly apply some radical ideas to change mindsets and challenge the status quo in order to drive public sector reform. General agreement that the focus to date had been around the NWIEP funding but that it needed to be seen and become the 'public sector reform' commission.

Key points raised from the discussion:

- Have had some success but is it enough – has it benefited our citizens?
- First year/ months incurred set up costs and time in establishing the Programme Office
- Should also be focussing on internal capacity – not as 'sexy' but the softer issues still important
- Update report - comments
 - Key was Members intervention enabling the Programme Office to collate the information
 - Quantifying costs is difficult
 - Slow start but savings have been identified and starting to happen
- Complex issue – needs to be considered in parallel with each authority's own transformation programme
 - Generally agreement of the need to understand each others' programmes more – to talk, share and learn
 - Need to take more time to consider what is working elsewhere, how do we learn and obtain the knowledge including the innovative work and apply that learning back in our own authority
 - Key is to link this agenda to authorities business plans
- Changing the culture – the 'how' is the issue
 - Need to lead by example and change the way we operate as a Commission
 - Need to be smarter and more target orientated
- Members are key to leadership and driving change

Councillor Priest asked if details of authorities' efficiency targets could be shared and it was confirmed that the AGMA Treasurers' Group were currently collating such information for the next three to four years and it was AGREED to make this available to the Commission – Steve Houston to action

It was AGREED that an initial work programme outlining significant targets be brought for further discussion, including around how and what the Commission can do to achieve this agenda more effectively.

Councillor Priest suggested that Members could also discuss how each Authority was overcoming some of the barriers to change and to begin to look at how they can operate more effectively in their own Councils.

4. TOTAL PLACE INITIATIVE

Joyce gave a presentation to update the meeting on the Total Place initiative and confirmed that the count of public spending had now been completed with more than 80% of the total of £22 billion coming from local authorities, the health sector and DWP.

The theme for AGMA is 0-5 years and Joyce stated there would be greater emphasis on a more targeted service based on needs to reduce dependency on the service. The outcomes expected from this initiative were:-

- Service transformation which can improve the experience of residents and deliver better values
- Deliver early efficiencies to validate the work
- Develop a body of knowledge about how more effective cross-agency working delivers these in practice

Joyce emphasised the need for strong leadership to drive out the possibilities and opportunities that are emerging through this initiative.

5. AGMA STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT HUB

Theresa Grant and Ian Claydon-Butler gave a presentation to the group which included proposals for a new Procurement Hub model.

The Commission Members were asked to approve the proposal for the Hub to become a Centre of Excellence and work with and through each local authority procurement service to develop and deliver a consistent model across AGMA.

The Hub would ensure that Regional Strategies were woven into the AGMA approach to increase benefits predicted by fully utilising collaborative procurement.

The proposal outlined has been adopted by Bolton Council with the Senior Procurement Officer from Manchester seconded full time to Bolton, supported by Manchester's Procurement Manager and Manchester's Head of Procurement.

Stockport, Rochdale, Trafford and Manchester have committed to the process and following approval, plans will be developed with the Regional Hub to establish a Procurement Transformation Team on a rolling basis through the AGMA authorities.

It was agreed that although concerns had been raised at the July meeting of the Commission, this proposal would now enable substantial savings to be achieved which would help the Procurement Hub to be more sustainable once NWIEP funding was no longer available. Joyce emphasised that the agreement was for the NWIEP funding to be top loaded for this year and that the hub needed to demonstrate back to the Commission return on investment and self sufficiency going forward.

Members felt that good progress had been made since the last meeting but stressed that to achieve total “buy in” and to ensure “quick wins”, it would be vital to monitor why local authorities were not always becoming involved in collaborative opportunities.

Theresa thanked Members for their support and pointed out that such information was recorded with some reasons for non-involvement being quite legitimate. Theresa also agreed that quarterly reports detailing specific contracts could be made available to Members.

Members AGREED the approach outlined in the presentation.

6. COLLABORATIVE EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME UPDATE

Cynthia informed Members that since the last meeting in July the Efficiency Programme Office had made good progress in each of the ten priority service areas and had met with Collaborative Service Group (CSG) members to understand the current position within each authority and ensure closer engagement in working collaboratively.

An Away Day had been held in September looking at progress, opportunities and challenges which had resulted in a clear message from CSG members to move forward with all ten service areas.

The Programme Office had also held workshops during October with the Service Managers to discuss how collaborative opportunities would be taken forward and following this delivery plans had been compiled.

Cynthia referred to the matrices circulated at the meeting for Social Transport and Customer Contact which detailed savings identified by authorities for individual opportunities and pointed out that these figures were still considered to be conservative due to authorities being cautious about possible savings.

A request was made to circulate information well in advance of meetings but it was pointed out that even though Members asked for this information in July this had only been provided by some authorities in the last few days, but that the fact it was to be brought to Members was a catalyst to getting the information, albeit late.

Members asked that comments be included against those opportunities which authorities had decided not to implement and also suggested that Members be made aware of any information which was requested from officers to help them to support such requests. It was AGREED that future updates be presented in a similar format

and also that Members be copied into requests to officers to help ensure these requests are met.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Total Place Conference

Joyce informed Members that the LGA were holding two conferences in November 2009 and March 2010 on Total Place and agreed to circulate the details electronically.

Adults Directorate, Stockport MBC

Councillor Pantall informed the meeting that the Chief Executive of the PCT, NHS Stockport had been appointed to the post of Corporate Director (Adults) which was a new combined post spanning both Stockport PCT and Stockport MBC. This would hopefully encourage a more joined-up focus across the authority and NHS Stockport on priority neighbourhoods and even closer working between Stockport's Children & Young People's Directorate and NHS Stockport.

Date of Next Meeting

Councillor Priest confirmed the date of the next meeting as 27 January 2010 and after a discussion in relation to the start time it was agreed to commence the meeting at 5.00 p.m.

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