

Performance Management Representative's Report on 26 Jan 2007 Meeting
By Mary Simpson

Overview and my thoughts

This meeting holds potentially a very challenging role and much power.

It will be difficult to make decisions at short notice without a broad overview and plenty of information. There is already a large amount to read!

We are greatly dependent upon the skills and knowledge of the officers to the committee. Both are very competent however, there are dangers that too much responsibility will be placed with them and the committee swayed by their opinions too readily. The committee will need to question effectively and scrutinise recommendations robustly.

This can feel a bit awkward when it is clear that a delayed decision because of lack of information may lead to a delay in resource allocation.

At this meeting we had only 3 suggested recipients for some revenue funds and 1 for capital. I'd like to explore how such opportunities can be fairly made available whilst retaining the conditions of targeting funds at LAA priority areas.

Though we may have to make some pragmatic decisions on occasion a system does need to be devised to quickly define what we want done and how much is available and distribute widely to demonstrate fairness but not be overwhelmed by loads of applications which don't fit and people whose time has been wasted.

It feels OK to target certain organisations or 'task & finish groups' but that requires a sound all-encompassing knowledge of who is out there. Does the committee have this?

From my perspective as a rep, I'd appreciate some kind of list of contacts and descriptions of the shape of the voluntary sector – and/or should be using the USA co-ordinator more to discuss who I might suggest to join such groups.

As there are so many more statutory people at the PMG committee the tendency is to suggest names/dependents known to them. I find it hard to suggest voluntary sector contributions, as I do not have a wide enough knowledge outside youth work.

All this said I felt comfortable with the decisions made at the meeting.

My contribution to the meeting as VSA rep.

Made sure minutes corrected to note concerns expressed previous meeting.

During the meeting we had to declare interests. Declaration of interest for me included

- Connexions funds at TVYP
- USA rep so interest in USA funding
- Any that HCVYS get?

In discussions of agenda items my input included

- Request for chair role to be clarified
- Declaration of interest taken at pts 5 & 6
- Corrected minutes to emphasise comments re cross – sector/silo working
- Chris Bucknell raised concerns re recording of cross-sector working and added value. Checked that V sector strategic plans were also being collected as only statutory were mentioned
- Joint working to address few (7) families' needs in B&B's. Also perhaps include housing associations who may have families moving in.
- Criminal damage incidents still a major issue. I gave input re involving young people in finding solutions as well as Implementation group.
- Antisocial behaviour group, alcohol group were mentioned. I suggested to include a piece of work asking young people about behaviour and possible solutions.
- Confirmed perception reports – underlying measures will be looked at in 2 monthly meeting by headline target yearly
- Underspend deliberations contributed input re term 'sustainability' and 'setting precedent' with reference to the voluntary sector and queried delay to decide.

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Subsequent to the meeting extra information was supplied for a decision re resources. There were not many applicants so decisions were easily made.

Whether there were more worthy or better judged decisions that could have been made it is difficult to say. It was not ideal even though VSA benefited. Had there been more recipients I like to think VSA might still have been chosen by its merit– One non-voluntary sector member of the group wanted it all to be given to VSA, which was good to hear! Lack of possible recipients and just being in the right place at the right time could lead to problems in how we are perceived in future by our membership. I think VSA needs to take care.

In the time available I think on this occasion a pragmatic approach has meant funds are not lost to Herefordshire. Improving the situation and allocating underspend earlier has been acknowledged as a priority for next year. At least nobody feels this was an ideal way to allocate underspend!