

MINUTES OF TPT GROUP MEETING

County Hall, Bedford

6th June 2006

Present:

Sarah Hughes (Chair)	Bedfordshire County Council
Len Simkins	Infotrain
Mark Smith	Mid Bedfordshire CVS
Sue Walmsley	Infotrain
Kim Norris	Bedford Credit Union
Peter Doyle	Bedford Credit Union
Rob Parsons	Mid Bedfordshire District Council
Philippa Harris	Bedford & District CAB
Tanya Richardson	Website Consultant
Liz Robertson	BPHA
David Waggott	Mid Bedfordshire CAB

1. Apologies

Maureen Baker	BPHA
Marcus Pheasant	Furniture Link Bedford

Action

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting (7th March 2006) were accepted as an accurate record subject to the following change:

Item 1 - Yasmin Mahmood (Bedford Borough Council) had been mistakenly omitted from the apologies list.

2.2 **Matters arising:**

Item 2.2: TPT Website - The OCSI report of IMD (Indices of Multiple Deprivation) has been added to the Group's website. There is also a link to a downloadable version.

Item 3.3: Mid Bedfordshire CAB is now a member of the Group. Alasdair Christie is the designated representative, although David Waggott attended this meeting. Aragon Housing Association will be invited to join the Group and Sutish Mahrra of Jobcentre Plus

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All other matters were covered on this meeting's agenda

3. TPT Group Action Plan 2006-07

- 3.1 The Group Action Plan 2006-07 was distributed.

- **Meetings** - it was agreed to continue with a specific theme/focus for future meetings.
- **Newsletter** - some changes have been made to the design and layout of *Poverty News*, specifically the conversion to a pdf format for electronic distribution. A question regarding numbers of paper copies required will be included in the upcoming membership survey.

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- **Future projects** - work is continuing towards the establishment of a Credit Union in Mid Bedfordshire and a Benefits Take-up Campaign in Bedford. Update reports will be available on the Group's website. The Group needs to begin to consider what issues/projects/action to take up in the future at the next meeting so that plans can be in place for the next Action Plan review in March 2007.

LS

All

Sue will update the Action Plan 2006-07 indicating where success criteria have been met. The Action Plan will be available on the Group website.

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3.2 Terms of Reference

An updated version of the Group's Terms of Reference was distributed.

Appendix 1 now contains a list of individual members, their organisation, department and job title where available. It was noted that there was no representation from JobCentre Plus, Aragon Housing Association or Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire. Peter Doyle should be added to the membership list. Paul Vann should be removed from the list. The forthcoming merger of Mid and North Beds. CVSs will also impact upon the Group's membership list.

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It was decided to wait until after the forthcoming Membership Review to produce an updated version of the Terms of Reference. This document will then be available on the Group's website.

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3.3 Membership Review

A draft TPT Group Members' Survey was distributed. The following points were made.

- **Section 1** - "Do you wish to remain a member of the TPT Group?" needs to be added.
- **Question 2(f)** - the wording needs to be amended to elicit from members what role they see themselves playing within the Group. The Terms of Reference will be sent out with the survey to help with this question.
- **Section 3** - "Is your organisation linked to the TPT Website?" needs to be added.
- **Question 3(c)** - "How many paper copies of *Poverty News*?" needs to be added.
- **Section 4** - "Do you know of any other organisations that should be members of the TPT Group?" needs to be added.
- **Section 4** - suggestions for future projects needs to be a separate question

The Members' Survey will be distributed in electronic and paper format in July and results will be discussed at the next Group meeting.

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3.4 TPT Website

Tanya distributed the latest website statistics and explanatory notes. Tanya pointed out that a link to a specific activity/event is key to increased usage of the website. However, despite the lack of a TPT Conference this year, the figures show an overall increase in activity.

Tanya asked that all members inform her of any appropriate activity / event for inclusion on the Group's website.

All

It was suggested that Group members should be emailed when new information (e.g. the OCSI report) is added to the website. Sue and Tanya will liaise on this matter.

Infotrain/
TR

Tanya will bring three new website designs to the next meeting for discussion.

TR

3.5 Theme for next meeting

Suggestions made at the last meeting were "Investing in Communities" and "Fuel Poverty".

It was decided that "Fuel Poverty" will be the theme for the next meeting. A presentation will be arranged to give a countywide perspective on this issue.

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Sarah will prepare an update on Investing in Communities for *Poverty News*.

SH

It was pointed out that the Group needs to begin to consider what project / course of action to pursue next year. Issues suggested were: debt advice in Bedfordshire; child poverty; migrant workers; BME issues. Other issues may come out of the Members' Survey.

It was decided that at the next meeting the Group will consider themes/ issues for future projects. If possible, the meeting will include short presentations on 4 or 5 suggestions.

4. Development of A Credit Union in Mid Bedfordshire

4.1 Rob Parsons updated the Group on progress to date. A meeting of the focus group was held at Aragon Housing Association on 7th April. Unfortunately the minutes from this meeting have not yet been produced. Len will continue to chase for these minutes

LS

The key issue to emerge from the meeting was the need to identify individual community leaders to push the project through. However, before involving individuals guidance is needed as to what they need to do.

Contact has been made with Sally Chicken at the East of England Credit Union Forum and Peter Bussy, Business Development Manager of the Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL) with a view to arranging an evening presentation to representatives from community groups. Peter Bussy would be willing to take part in such an evening. This evening meeting would be arranged for sometime in September.

The next meeting of the Focus Group has been arranged for 3rd July. Peter Bussy is unable to attend this meeting.

4.2 During the discussion which followed Rob's update the following points were raised:

- The geographical **location** of the credit union needs to be considered. There are four urban centres in mainly rural Mid Bedfordshire. Sandy would seem to be the prime candidate. Christian Family Care at Manor Farm, Sandy had already started to look into the possibility of establishing a credit union and would be interested in attending the proposed presentation. David Waggott confirmed that the CAB office in Biggleswade could be used for publicity and the Bureau could provide a volunteer for the focus group. It would be prudent to set up in one location initially and then expand to other areas.

- Clarification is needed as to what sort of service/support ABCUL could provide. The focus group also needs to clarify political and funding issues before involving members of the wider community. It was agreed that a meeting needs to be arranged with Peter Bussy before a presentation is made to community groups.
- It was decided to **change the date of the meeting** arranged for 3rd July to a date when Peter Bussy and Sarah Hughes are available, preferably before the end of July. Christian Family Care, Manor Farm and Moneymatters Credit Union will also be invited to this meeting. Rob will arrange this. Efforts will also be made to involve Sally Chicken in the meeting.
- To set up a credit union from scratch will take at least 2 years before being ready to operate. There would be real benefits from taking something already established and registered with the FSA and building on it in Mid Bedfordshire. Would it be possible for either Bedford Credit Union (BCU) or Money Matters Credit Union based in Luton to extend their Common Bond to cover Mid Bedfordshire? Peter Doyle and Kim Norris answered this question on behalf of BCU.
- BCU would have no objections in principle, but consideration must be given to:
 - Funding - a Development Officer would have to be funded for at least 6 months to liaise with the community, investigate locations etc.
 - Practical implications for BCU - they would have to prove to the FSA that they could cope with the extension to their Common Bond. However, the FSA are tending to favour larger credit unions.

RP

In general, Peter believes that the benefits of extending a Common Bond would outweigh these problems and that it would be cheaper in the long-run than setting up a credit union from scratch.

5. Benefits Take-up Campaign in Bedford

- 5.1 Len updated the Group on the progress of the TPT report and proposal discussed at the last meeting.

In April Bedford Partnership Board (the Bedford LSP) Including Everyone Theme Group agreed to recommend that a benefit take-up campaign in Bedford is funded.

This recommendation has been passed to the Bedford Partnership Board for approval at their meeting in July.

Len reminded the Group that if a campaign is funded in Bedford, the framework could be extended to Mid and/or South Bedfordshire.

Len will continue to update the Group on this issue.

LS

6. Links with local LSPs / LSF / LAA

- 6.1 Strong links have been established with Bedford Partnership Board (BPB) Including Everyone Theme Group. Philippa Harris will try to attend their next meeting. Yasmin Mahmood (BPB) regularly attends TPT Group meetings.

Sandra Einon is the Mid Beds. LSP representative on the TPT Group,

however, she has not been able to attend TPT meetings. A strong link to Mid Beds. LSP is yet to be established.

Karen Oellermann is the South Beds. LSP contact, however, she is not a member of the TPT Group. Vivien Cannon is the South Beds. District Council representative on the TPT Group, but has not been able to attend Group meetings.

LSP representatives have been specifically invited to TPT meetings in the past, however, only BPB have attended.

- 6.2** It was suggested that the TPT Group should monitor LSP Community Plans and Local Area Agreement (LAA) outcomes, i.e. “poverty proofing”.

Sarah Hughes was closely involved in the early stages of the development of the LAA. During this process she proposed an “indicator” that all outcomes should “**improve the economic and social well-being of deprived communities**”. This indicator was not taken on by the LAA.

It is proposed that the TPT Group adopt this indicator and apply it to the stated outcomes of the LAA and the LSP Community Plans.

- 6.3** At the next meeting, the Group will look at the anti-poverty outcomes from the LAA and LSPs. Sarah Hughes will present details of the LAA; Mark Smith and Rob Parsons will present details of the Mid Beds LSP; Len Simkins will present the details from Bedford Partnership Board to see how well the achieve Sarah's proposed indicator.

The Group's findings can then be reported back to the LSPs/LAA.

SH
MS/RP
LS

7. Activity Update / Poverty News

- 7.1** Activity update details will appear in the next edition of *Poverty News* which will be distributed in April. Please forward any items for inclusion to Sue (sue.walmsley@infotrain.co.uk) by 20th June.
- 7.2** **Finance Re-Direct** can now provide Public Liability Insurance for community groups for £50. For more information contact Tanya Richardson on 01234 358535.
- 7.3** **Bedford & District CAB** has appointed a new Advice Manager, Carol Axten.
- 7.4** **Mid Beds. Healthy Living Initiative** has only one more year to run under its current funding stream. Linda Willis of Bedfordshire Heartlands PCT is looking to set up a new regional bidding group for new lottery funding.
- 7.5** **Mid Beds. CAB** has moved to its new “Citizone” offices in Ampthilland the move seems to have resulted in increased business. The Bureau is hoping to promote a new Guidance Tutor from within its volunteer workforce.
- 7.6** As from 1st July Mid Beds. CVS and North Beds. CVS will merge to form one organisation.
- 7.7** **ChangeUp** – funding for consultant to look at social infrastructure requirements to support the housing growth planned as part of the MKSM growth strategy. Work is almost complete
- 7.8** **BPHA** have several events planned including a Pre-employment support launch on 7th July.

7.9 EEDA (East of England Development Agency) is organising a series of meetings to discuss the economic development of the East of England. The Bedfordshire meeting is at Shuttleworth College on 12th July at 4.00pm. For more information contact EEDA on 01223 713900 or visit www.eeda.org.uk or BLEDP 01525 862999

8. Any Other Business

8.1 As from 14th August, Rob Parsons will step down as Mid Beds. District Council TPT Group representative. Gill Dickinson will resume the role on her return from maternity leave. Rob was thanked for his positive contributions to the Group.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 19th September at 10.00 am** at County Hall, Bedford.

Documents discussed at this meeting can be found at www.tacklingpoverty-beds.org.uk