

Community Budgets – Governance Issues – Discussion Paper

Central Government Governance

- a) Central Government role would be to monitor work undertaken with families in 16 pathfinder areas up to 31 December 2011 and lead a process to agree with the 16 the characteristics of approaches that achieve best outcomes with a view to establishing a framework for implementation by all LAs (including those in Pathfinder programme) from 1 April 2012.
- b) Central Government to set up with Local Government Association an innovation sharing, performance oversight and monitoring unit which would track the progress of the programme and ensure that any underachieving in LAs is highlighted and support given where required. Existing resources to be identified to staff the unit which should be operational as soon as is possible.
- c) To date the CB Pathfinder has been led locally almost exclusively by LAs with Partners co-operating and participating or not at their own determination. This cannot be a formula for ultimate success as this approach relies almost entirely on goodwill and trusts between partners, a shared understanding of the benefits and outcomes, an agreement to a fair contribution of resource, financial or non-financial and a commitment to a totally different way of working. Given the number of partners required in each LA area to achieve successful outcomes, the numbers of staff needing to work differently and the number of LAs in the country then the above success criteria is not likely to be universal present.
- d) It is therefore recommended to Government that the following statutory agencies be informed, as a minimum, that they are mandatory full partners in the programme from the date of implementation for their LA area (there will be a consultation with the 16 to get a full list of essential core partners):

The Core Partners agencies in each LA area should include:

Council
Primary Care Trust/GP Consortia
Police (including Elected Police Commissioner)
Job Centre Plus
Probation
Primary/Secondary/Academy Heads (each category to appoint Board Rep)
NHS – Acute

Examples of Other Key Stakeholders

Fire
Voluntary & Community Sector
Business Partners
FE Colleges

Local Government Governance

- a) It is recommended that a CB Programme Board be established by each LA to implement, carry out and monitor performance of the project and the Board consist of all Core Partners and others as invited by the LA.
- b) The significance risk to the entire programme is that it is seen as Council led whereas only a multi-agency approach is likely to be successful. Currently there is no requirement for any other agencies to be a full partner of the programme other than by agreement. In times of diminishing resources there may be a tendency to avoid potential new commitments. It is therefore recommended that the Board be chaired by the Leader of Council or their appointed nominee and each Core Agency/Partner to be accountable to the Board via the Chair for their involvement and performance in the project and their resource contribution to it, financial or otherwise.
- c) It is recommended that the LA shares a project plan detailing its approach and project timelines, its team capacity and number of families to be worked with in the period from commencement to 31 March 2013. For Pathfinder LAs this should be shared via the Bichard group no later than 30 September 2011. For other LA areas an outline project plan to be prepared by 1 April 2012 and a detailed plan by 30 September 2012.
- d) It is suggested that each area should aim to redesign its services on a place basis so that all their families with complex needs and those in danger of developing complex needs receive new services by 31 March 2015 at the latest.
- e) It is further recommended that this requirement relates to families identified at the outset. Families meeting the criteria subsequent to commencement date be assessed as to whether they can be accommodated or not in the programme period or put on list for post 31 March 2015 involvement.
- f) It is further recommended that families be prioritised on the basis to be agreed by the CB board. The basis for prioritisation to be considered on urgent need, child protection consideration or effective resource allocation etc.
- g) It is recommended that LA areas that are regarded as failing to deliver satisfactory performance in the programme be invited to explain the reasons and accept offers of assistance if required.

- h) Issues of financial resourcing, agency contributions and sharing and allocation of potential savings in the future are not addressed at this stage but will need to be considered separately once an agreed approach and framework is in place. We believe the issue of public sector pooling is far wider than this project alone and will ultimately only be addressed through a single budget for place.

Councillor Roderick Bluh, Leader, Swindon Borough Council
20/05/11