



## WITHOUT WALLS PARTNERSHIP Minutes

---

**DATE** 26 September 2012

**VENUE** Marriott Room, York Explore, Library Square

**PRESENT Board Members:**

Cllr. James Alexander – City of York Council - Chair  
Len Cruddas – Chief Executive, LYNCC  
Pete Dwyer – Chair, Learning City York  
Jill Gibson, External Relations Manager – Jobcentre Plus  
Nigel Hutchinson- Chief Fire Officer, North Yorks Fire Service  
Peter Kay – Chair, Economic Development Partnership  
Fred Ring – York Racial Equality Network  
Rita Sanderson – Inclusive York Forum Representative  
Cllr Tracey Simpson-Laing, Chair Shadow H & WB Board  
Mike Slater, Chair York Environment Partnership  
Cllr Chris Steward – City of York Council

**In attendance:**

Chris Clarke – The National Conversation  
Martin Grainger – Head of Integrated Strategy, CYC  
Darren Richardson – Director City & Environmental Services  
David Taylor – The National Conversation  
Steve Waddington – AD Housing and Public Protection, CYC

**Secretariat:**

Stewart Halliday – Head of Strategy, Partnerships and Comms  
Denise Simms, Strategy, Partnerships & Planning Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Brian Cantor, Vice Chancellor - University of York  
Sir Ron Cooke – Vice Chair  
Kersten England, Chief Executive, CYC  
Cllr. Ian Gillies – City of York Council  
Temporary Chief Constable Tim Madgwick- North Yorks. Police  
Colin Mellors, University of York & Higher York  
Sue Metcalfe – Chair, YorOK  
Angela Portz, Chief Exec. – York Council for Vol. Service  
Cllr Carol Runciman – City of York Council  
Dianne Willcocks – Chair, York@Large  
Lisa Winward - Safer Neighbourhood Commander

## **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

David Taylor and Chris Clarke from The National Conversation were welcomed to York. Apologies were received from Brian Cantor, Sir Ron Cooke, Kersten England, Cllr Gillies, Tim Madgwick, Colin Mellors, Sue Metcalfe, Angela Portz, Cllr Runciman, Dianne Willcocks and Lisa Winward.

## **2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2012 were agreed.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

In terms of matters arising:

- Work was to be undertaken to ensure that Terms of Reference for WOW Partnerships were reviewed and adhered to. In addition that minutes and agendas would be made available on the website as a matter of course.
- The Health and Wellbeing Board were due to meet in early October and discussions planned would reflect funding discussions that were taking place.
- A paper regarding Financial Inclusion was due to be taken to Cabinet in November.

## **3 NATIONAL CONVERSATION**

Partners had received a briefing paper regarding the National Conversation, which was an independent initiative to find new ways to engage people with politics and Westminster.

David Taylor and Chris Clark explained that they were looking for inventive ways to mend the gap that had grown between people and parliament in the UK. The recent erosion of trust had had a significant outcome on polling outturns and they planned to experiment with inventive ways to reconnect people using interesting and engaging topics to re-ignite grass roots debate. The discussion that would take place in York was to be more of a traditional public meeting, however other media, such as Radio debates and online methods would be used also be used.

York had been chosen as the location for the Conversation as Yorkshire was one of the most representative counties. York, in particular, was chosen because of its vibrant civic culture, the landmark of 800 years of self-government and its pioneering history of social reform and recent work with the Fairness Commission.

The discussion programme for this conversation would encompass whether the Welfare State was fit for purpose, as it was a topic that touched everyone and would hopefully get people talking.

The Launch had been planned to take place in London on 16 October and would be attended by Cllr Alexander. Then online activities in the lead up were hoped to act as a stimulus to the main event. It was hoped that the event, which would take place on 18 October, would attract 45-50 people who wouldn't normally get involved in this type of activity.

Following the conversation a report would be prepared for government that included output regarding the topic, but also views on how better to reach people as a result of the experiment. Partners were encouraged to get involved and recruit attendees from their networks.

Comments following the presentation included:

- It was hoped that the conversation would get back to core principles about how people felt about the welfare state, although it was inevitable that some views about the reforms would come out;
- Attendees would be encouraged to think about today's giant evils and where resources should be targeted or taken away.
- Success would be measured through the quality of the feedback and how many people had engaged.
- It was anticipated that the mix of different activities would give everyone the opportunity to get involved in the conversation in a way that was most comfortable to them.
- Resource constraints meant that numbers participating in this conversation event would be fairly low, however, their views would be used to spark further conversations through news programs and radio phone-ins. It was hoped that more conversations would take place nationally in 2013.
- The idea was innovative and creative, however there was a risk of trying to do too much (i.e. the topic and the conversation). Good conversations were never one off and WOW should be challenged to continue to pick this up locally.
- There was a danger that the only people that would come out to this sort of meeting were the 'usual suspects' and that school gates and supermarkets were the places where you would find those who don't normally get involved.
- For those who have taken part in events in the past, but haven't always felt listened to, this would be an opportunity to highlight that participants have a direct line to Westminster.

- Twitter and Facebook are used everyday by a vast number of people and if used in this experiment would potentially reach the hard to reach.
- There would not be any politicians present at the event or specific party political engagement, which would make this approach different from what had gone before.

#### **4 LOCAL PLAN – NEXT STEPS**

Partners had received a briefing note regarding the next steps required to produce a Local Plan that was fully compliant with the national policy position. Martin Grainger, Head of Integrated Strategy, explained that the Local Plan had officially been withdrawn at a meeting of Full Council on 12<sup>th</sup> July. A report was due to be discussed by the Council's Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> Oct that set out the options for production of a new Development Plan for the city. The government change in planning regulations meant that the new Local Plan would need to include Vision, Strategy, housing and employment sites and all of the policies that would shape the place e.g. affordable housing.

In terms of the timetable for production of the plan, it was anticipated that a draft document would be ready for Apr / May 2013 and the plan would be finalised by February 2014. Vision consultation workshops were planned for October / November and would cover:

- Create jobs and grow the economy
- Get York moving
- Build strong communities
- Protect the environment

Sustainability and Inclusivity would be cross cutting themes at all of the workshops and the output from the sessions would be brought back to WOW.

Comments from Partners regarding the update included:

- The development vision would be key to build together, using economic growth as the cornerstone and incorporating sufficient flexibility to protect the city's resilience;
- Crime and community safety was a cross-cutting theme that would impact on the infrastructure delivery plan, design of neighbourhoods and access to services;
- Assurance was needed that the massive amount of previous consultation was not lost and that output from the vision workshops were used to add to that baseline data;
- Lack of a Local Plan leaves uncertainty and it would be important to see drive and action to get the plan agreed earlier if possible;

- The timetable reflected the requirement to update out of date evidence, respond to new planning requirements and changed economic circumstances;
- The Regional Spatial Strategy was due to end and this may lead to more pressure on Greenbelt Land;
- The city was vulnerable without the plan, but it needed to be developed with full engagement and to a realistic timescale, so that's it was done properly. Not everyone would agree with it but it was time to show leadership and move on.

**Action** – It was agreed that:

1. The output from the Vision Consultation sessions would be brought back to the Without Walls Partnership for consideration.

## **5 HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS DEBATE**

A briefing on the issues associated with housing and homelessness was tabled on the day. Steve Waddington AD (Housing and Public Protection) explained that, in terms of homelessness, the council had a statutory duty to produce a strategy, developed and delivered with Partners. The current strategy sets out four objectives relating to:

- Access to services;
- Sufficient provision to meet housing need;
- Assessment of need;
- Provision of appropriate accommodation

In order to give some background context to the discussion, it was explained that:

- Affordable housing need was currently 750 per year and in 2011/12 151 homes were delivered.
- The annual review of formal homeless preventions had shown a 60% increase in cases;
- There had been a significant increase in demand this financial year for housing advice up 76% (1900 to 3400 requests).
- People sleeping rough remained low figures were higher this year.

The biggest single reason for homelessness was parental exclusion. The increased demand for services was having a significant impact on the city.

House building nationally had stalled as a result of the recession and the difficulties faced by developers and customers to obtain finance. Last year there were only 321 building completions, however, delivery of affordable housing had remained stable and had, in some cases, made developments viable.

Steve explained that 2,874 agreed planning permissions had not been built out. It was important to understand what the barriers to these developments were, such as the difficulties in accessing finance, section 106 agreements etc.

Comments from Partners included:

- Councils had the authority to lend money under Wellbeing Powers. Officers were speaking to developers about this and options would be brought to council imminently;
- Attempting to manipulate the market was rarely effective, however, there was scope to be creative in how planning gain and section 106 was used.
- Other areas, such as Toxteth and Bradford had used innovative ideas such as a 'rent holiday' to encourage home ownership and churn in the market, which was worth exploring.
- It was not the job of the council to socially engineer housing, but it was their role to take away barriers to development, such as affordable housing quotas;
- York's affordable housing quotas were comparably low in North Yorkshire and numbers were also negotiable. Some developers were unaware that the policy had changed and it would be important to have one to one conversations with developers about this.
- Some landowners were waiting for the market to increase and would sit on sites until land values increased.
- A new model of creative conversations about how one of the city's key priorities could be delivered needed to be developed.
- The model would not fit all and therefore developers need to be looked at differently. Big and small house builders will have differing needs to kick start building.
- Affordable housing led development at the college site.
- It was frustrating that Growing Places Funding, to unlock development sites, was not being used for what it was intended.
- There was a need to get sites moving, but it would be better to encourage developments with a carrot rather than a stick.
- The homeless figures for York did not take account of the impending benefit changes and this was likely to have a significant impact.

## 6 **PROGRESS AGAINST THE CITY PLAN**

Partners received copies of the revised Sustainability and Fairness impact assessment questionnaire. In addition, a City Plan Action Tracker had been developed with the assistance of 'Lead Deliverer' representatives. The tracker incorporated key milestones for each action and as milestones were met, the markers would be greyed.

In developing the tracker, it was clear that interdependencies between actions needed to be highlighted. Also that Fairness Commission recommendations would need to be referenced.

Comments from Partners included:

- Gaps in the milestones were evident, especially in the sharing growth theme. Actions from the One City Strategy would fit here.
- Partnerships tended to work in isolation and they needed to broaden out and link up more on cross cutting issues.

## 7 **POLICY UPDATE**

Partners had received for information a briefing that reviewed recent national policy and highlighted key issues for the forthcoming year.

## 8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Rita Sanderson reported that Angela Portz had stepped down as Chair of the Inclusive York Board and that Rita had taken over as temporary Chair. The IYB were currently reviewing the role of Chair to take in to account, for example Fairness Commission recommendations and Community Action Plans. Partners were asked to forward any nominations for the replacement Chair to the Secretariat.

Mike Slater explained about the ENGAGEd initiative, whereby York had pledged to join the European campaign to drive down carbon emissions. York Environment Forum were leading on this locally and Partners had been contacted to get involved in events taking place locally.

**Action** – It was agreed that:

- Any thoughts / nominations for the new IYB Chair would be forwarded to the Secretariat.
- IYB would look at developing a job description and advert for the role similar to the process used by the Economic Partnership.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 18:00pm.

**Date of Next Meetings – All to take place 4-6pm**

- 19 December 2012
- 27 March 2013
- 26 June 2013