Report of Partnership Day 10,

Raising Aspirations, Educational Attainment and Skills

16 March 2011
1. Pre Event Information

In advance of this event each of the delegates was provided with a copy of the programme.

2. Background of the North Warwickshire Community Partnership
North Warwickshire Community Partnership

The simple rationale behind the work of the partnership is that by working in partnership, we are more likely to achieve more by working together that if we were to work in isolation.

The partnerships vision is:

“Rural North Warwickshire; a community of communities. A place where people want to live, work and visit, now and in the future, which meets the diverse needs of existing and future residents, is sensitive to the local environment, and contributes to a high quality of life. A place which is safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offers equality of opportunity and good services for all”.

The partnerships strategy and priorities

The partnership is responsible for the delivery of the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy and action plans. The strategy sets out our three key priorities for improving the overall quality of life in North Warwickshire from 2009 to 2026. These are:

- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- Developing Healthier Communities
- Improving Access to Services

The North Warwickshire Community Partnerships membership

The partnership comprises of representatives of the public, private and voluntary sector including the Borough and County Councils, NHS Warwickshire, Warwickshire Police and a range of other organisations from the voluntary, business, community and public sectors. Through its diverse membership, the partnership seeks to influence the way partners plan and deliver services, providing the strategic co-ordination within the area and will put in place the appropriate structures to deliver the strategy.

As the North Warwickshire Community Partnership is working in an increasingly complex and challenging environment with greater expectations being placed on it, this has increased the need to ensure that the partnership
is fit for purpose and able to respond to new challenges. This has involved setting up a new group to look at some of the partnerships challenges namely, the Coordinating Group and replacing the original Theme Groups with Task and Finish Groups.

**Structure, membership and roles and responsibilities**

Thus, the North Warwickshire Community Partnership comprises of the following:

The North Warwickshire Community Partnership Board
The Coordinating Group
Task and Finish Groups

**The North Warwickshire Community Partnership**

The North Warwickshire Community Partnership structure comprises a family of partnerships, brings together a number of partner agencies responsible for the delivery of the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy.

**North Warwickshire Community Partnership Coordinating Group**

The Coordinating Group with the support and approval of the Vice Chair of the Partnership role is to ensure that the work of the Partnership is co-ordinated in the intervals between Board Meetings and be a forum for the identification and resolution of work streams arising from the operational activity of the Partnership.

**Task and Finish Groups**

The Task and Finish Groups are responsible for the delivery of the actions set out in the North Warwickshire Sustainable Community Strategy and for providing quarterly progress reports.

The North Warwickshire Community Partnership Task and Finish Groups will be established following on from the three events.

**3. Partnership Day 10 Events**

The North Warwickshire Community Partnership agreed to hold three partnership events to consider current priorities and look to have clear priorities and actions for the coming year.

The Education Event was the third partnership event held. The first event the 'Healthier Communities' took place on the 16th February followed by an 'Access to Services' event held on 3 March 2011.
4. Event aim

The aim of the event was to inform the preparations for the North Warwickshire Community Partnership raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills action plan – focussing on the added value through partnership working.

A copy of the programme follows is attached (appendix 1). Overall 35 delegates attended the event (full list in appendix 2).

5. Summary of the sessions

A brief summary of each of the sessions is provided below. Full presentations are provided in appendix 3.

Welcome

Colin Hayfield, chair of the North Warwickshire Community Partnership, introduced this item in light of the development of a new Sustainable Community Strategy and recent changes in the North Warwickshire Community Partnership.

Context Setting

Raising Aspirations, Educational Attainment & Skills - The changing landscape

Geoff King, Head of Service, Children Young People and Families Directorate, Warwickshire County Council, provided an update on the changing landscape. Geoff highlighted the many significant changes introduced since May 2010 that were going to have a significant impact. These included the introduction of academies, with Polesworth School being one of the first in the County to become an academy, the changing and reducing role of the County Council, the changing role of schools with regard to purchasing services, reductions in funding.

An overview of Aspirations, Skills & Attainment in North Warwickshire

The presentation was to be given by Kate McGrory however due to unforeseen circumstances Kate was unable to attend. As a result the presentation was considered after lunch. The presentation provided information about the area highlighting key issues relating to attainment and skills and the gap in evidence around Aspirations.

Workshops

There were three workshops throughout the day. All delegates attended each of the workshops which were Aspirations, Attainment and Skills. This gave everyone the opportunity to participate, consider the issues and their potential role.
A view from the Business Sector

A presentation was made by Andy McDonald head of Talent at TNT highlighting the role being taken by TNT to recruiting and developing their workforce. The need is driven by a skills shortage within Logistics. TNT are taking a positive approach to developing their own workforce through opportunities including apprenticeships and degree level qualifications that are available to all current and prospective employees. Issues identified included lack of basic skills including literacy and numeracy within their existing workforce and for some prospective employees.

6. In Summary

The Day was well attended with representatives from County and Borough Councils, Community and Voluntary Groups and organisations as well as from the business sector. There are many positive outcomes that can be built on as a result. Those attending the event recognised that participation by schools was very limited and requires specific action as this is a gap that needs to be addressed to “round out” the event.

Clear links have been highlighted to priorities identified at previous Partnership events including:

Links to the development of Community Hubs identified as a key outcome from the Access to Services event.

Ensure Front Line Workers are aware of the opportunities indentified as a key outcome from the access to services event.

Links to the Obesity priority of developing further the “Cook n Taste” programme identified as a key outcome from the Healthier Communities event.

Other issues to be taken forward include:

Improving links with business through building on and developing initiatives such as Make a Difference Day and up-skilling projects such as school banks, financial inclusion, parenting courses.

Developing initiatives to break the low aspirations cycle including early years, NEETs, pre NEETs and pre employment training.

Developing initiatives to assist local people to be successful in securing local jobs.
Outcome of Aspirations Workshop

The workshop was focussed on consideration of four key questions:

- What do we mean by Aspirations?
- What is the baseline - low aspirations?
- What is happening already?
- What can we do in partnership - added value to existing projects?
  - new project ideas?

What do we mean by Aspirations?

During the workshops it was clear that aspirations means different things to people. For children and young people issues include things such as lifestyles, careers, feeling valued, more than just education, their hopes and dreams. There are other issues including links to failure, confidence, self esteem, coping skills. There was a need to celebrate success and recognise the wider aspirations and not just those succeeding. For adults aspirations change as people get older. For families the degree of aspiration can be reflected in levels of child poverty and financial inclusion.

Aspirations of others (on you and for others and community). It is important that ‘manual’ skills recognised as being equally important as GCSE passes and that we look at the INDIVIDUAL. There is a need to address issues that restrict aspirations (need positive environment and reinforcement). Each persons aspirations are informed by the people, organisations and institutions they come in to contact with (values, expectations and peer pressure).

What is the baseline - low aspirations?

The discussions highlighted that there was very little “hard” evidence to quantify aspirations though it was recognised that there was “soft”, often anecdotal evidence available. There are examples of indicators that point towards levels of aspirations including the number of NEETs, young people attending education - school, college, university, further education. It was more difficult to find evidence for examples of adult aspirations. There are also issues linked to community expectations and level of employment.

Issues were also identified relating to the impact of changes to the schools in the future. There was concern about the access some organisations would have in the future to pupils in secondary schools that become academies. Something that might become more challenging as more schools become academies.

The value of the link to schools provided by the Extended Services Cluster Co-ordinators was highlighted as good practice that will be a significant loss. The reductions in the Connexions Service, which in the future will focus on year 11 pupils, and will not be able to influence pupils when they are choosing
their options. Concerns were highlighted about the PRU going and how the schools taking responsibility for excluded pupils will work out.

What is happening already? – current projects and NEW ideas

The workshops all considered what is already underway across the Borough to address issues of low aspirations. During the discussions a range of initiatives were identified that help including projects such as school banking that develop financial skills for young people, informal learning opportunities in the community for adults, volunteering opportunities, etc.

The discussions also identified that a range of organisations involved in the projects which included Volunteer Centre, Revolve; Gateway (people with disabilities); Scouts, Guides etc.: Neighbourhood Watch; Adult and Community Learning; Credit Union; Princes Trust; Theatre Workshop; Sure Start and Children’s Centres Centre’s.

It was agreed that improving links with schools was important and would assist in the development of both new projects and existing projects. Other opportunities identified included those presented by the Olympics and closer working with the 14-19 Partnership.

What can we do in partnership? – 3 key ideas

The groups were asked to identify three issues that could be taken forward to start addressing some of the issues. The issue to go forward were

- Developing Community Hubs across the Borough which would enable local people to access IT, basic skills, financial literacy, other skills as identified by the community, etc.

- Improving links with Business for example developing ‘Make a Difference Day’ style events. Improve links between local businesses and schools.

- Up-skilling projects using a more informal approach for example school banks, Cook ‘n’ Taste, financial inclusion, parenting courses.
Outcome from Skills Workshops

All groups expressed concerns that low aspirations are a recurring theme which develops during very early years, fuels low attainment and subsequent low skills level. There seems to be a culture of ‘no expectation’ that runs through the community and very little ‘hope’ amongst young people who seem almost resigned to life without employment.

Issues were identified around poor attendance in early years and school settings which in turn leads to low attainment and begins the cycle. Attendance is clearly related to achievement and skills levels. Successful projects to improve attendance were identified and included:

- No authorised holiday during term time policy.
- Family breakfast clubs which encouraged parents to attend with their children.
- Work with individual families to highlight the impact on learning of being regularly absent from school.

Issues were also identified around engagement. Most organisations felt it is difficult to engage with the community and that more sharing of knowledge about available services in the locality would benefit everyone and help to support individuals they were supporting. Communication was also seen as a key issue, with the changing landscape with funding it was felt amongst all groups that the sharing of information, projects and good practice would aid all stakeholders and ensure that duplication of time and resources was reduced.

Examples of successful engagement projects were:

- Branching Out Bus project
- Peer Mentoring
- Work with NEETs in Northern Warwickshire

Business in the Community identified a successful pilot project linking 6 schools to 6 businesses in Coventry and were hoping to establish something similar in Northern Warwickshire.

It was felt that more engagement with local employers was needed to raise existing skills levels. A large number of employers in North Warwickshire are SME’s with very low skilled employees. If we are to raise skills levels in the area this is a key group to engage.

There are a number of large businesses in the area who employ a large number of people from outside the borough. Further developments within the borough are planned and in keeping with the theme ‘local jobs for local people’ it was suggested that:

- Available funding could be linked to job outcomes.
- Employers, schools and colleges (including the area partnership) are engaged to identify and support relevant skills acquisition.
• If there are job opportunities training matches skills requirements.
• Businesses support guaranteed interviews to those who successfully completed identified training.

The 3 key issues to be carried forward were:-
• To maximise front line services
• Support initiatives to break the low aspirations cycle. Early Years, NEETs, pre NEETs and pre employment training.
• To support the agenda for local people to be successful in securing local jobs.
Outcomes from the Attainment workshops

It was recognised that attainment within North Warwickshire is and has been for sometime a major issue and has a significant impact on skills and aspirations. At secondary school level performance is low with the exception being the performance of Polesworth School. Performance at primary school is variable with some schools performing very well whilst others are significantly lower.

The full effect of changes to the education system including schools becoming academies and the potential for free schools are becoming clearer. Polesworth was one of the first schools in Warwickshire to become an academy. The changes include services for schools being purchased by schools from any provider and not necessarily from the County Council. Schools have responsibility for purchasing 31 functions – previously it was 6 functions. This significantly changes the relationship between the County Council (who provided most of those services) and Schools.

It was felt that there needs to be closer working with schools on a range of issues. Whilst there is still a little uncertainty as a result of academies etc there are still many opportunities for developing shared initiatives with schools, some of which will include working with parents.

Issues of home to school and home to college transport were highlighted. The changes proposed by recent County Council reviews of the services will have a significant impact when they are implemented. For some it might mean that young people will face financial problems in accessing school or college of their choice. This is a particular problem in a rural area such as North Warwickshire.

The impact of the number of pupils attending schools in North Warwickshire from outside the county was considered. A number of the schools, particularly secondary schools, have a significant number of pupils from outside Warwickshire for example a number of pupils at Coleshill secondary school come from Solihull. This was highlighted as there might be a negative impact on the performance of the school.

Lack of aspiration in some families for their children to achieve. For a variety of reasons some families see little value in encouraging their children to achieve at school. It is something that can be seen from the early years to secondary school.

The success of projects such as the Peer mentoring project whereby mentors from QE helping children from primary schools to make the transition to QE, especially those facing challenges. Also the project supporting the development of school banks to raise awareness of financial issues for young people.

One project highlighted was Playing for Success where pupils from schools in Atherstone attended the Playing for Success centre in Nuneaton to undertake
a programme aimed at raising their attainment. Programme very well received by participants, parents schools etc. Unfortunately the project has recently ended though on a positive note the equipment is to be based in Atherstone so will be available for use by pupils in North Warwickshire.

It was agreed that further consultation was required with both primary and secondary schools to make sure that their views were obtained in determining key priorities for action by the Partnership.

Further research would be undertaken to identify the impact of young people from outside Warwickshire on attainment in North Warwickshire.
**Partnership Day 10**  
**Raising Aspirations, Educational Attainment and Skills Event**  
**Wednesday 16 March 2011**  
**Venue - North Warwickshire Borough Council offices.**

### Programme

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Facilitator/Presenter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Arrival and registration</td>
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</table>
| 9:30 – 9:35 | Welcome

  Event overview

| 9:35-9:45 | Context setting

  Event aims

| 9:45-10:00 | Raising Aspirations, Educational Attainment & Skills

  The changing landscape

| 10:00-10:25 | An overview of Aspirations, Skills & Attainment in North Warwickshire

| 10:25-10:30 | Introduction to the workshops

| 10:30-11:30 | Workshop 1

  - Aspirations
  - Attainment
  - Skills

| 11:30-11:50 | Coffee break

| 11:50-12:50 | Workshop 2

  - Aspirations
  - Attainment
  - Skills

- Steve Maxey
- Colin Hayfield (Chair of NWCP)
- Geoff King (Warwickshire County Council)
- Kate McGrory (Warwickshire Observatory)
- Jaki Douglas
- Timothy Howram
- Lorraine Broadaway
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>12:50-13:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:30-13:35</td>
<td>Welcome to the afternoon session</td>
<td>Steve Maxey</td>
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<td>13:35-14:00</td>
<td>A view from the Business Sector</td>
<td>Andy McDonald General Manager – Talent (TNT)</td>
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<td>14:00-15:00</td>
<td>Workshop 3</td>
<td>Jaki Douglas, Timothy Howram, Lorraine Broadaway</td>
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<td>15:00-15:10</td>
<td>Comfort Break</td>
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<td>15:10-15:25</td>
<td>Next steps</td>
<td>Steve Maxey</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:25-15:30</td>
<td>Summary &amp; Close</td>
<td>Steve Maxey</td>
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### Attendees for Partnership Day – Raising Aspirations, Educational Attainment & Skills

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kay Aldersley</td>
<td>First Resort</td>
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<td>Eve Bailey</td>
<td>WCC</td>
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<td>Robert Beggs</td>
<td>NWBC</td>
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<td>Dave Bradford</td>
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<td>Cheryl Bridges</td>
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<td>Lorraine Broadaway</td>
<td>North Warwickshire &amp; Hinckley College</td>
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<td>Jaki Douglas</td>
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<td>Adrian Edgington</td>
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<td>Jess Grove</td>
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<td>Colin Hayfield</td>
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<td>Timothy Howram</td>
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<td>Jerry Hutchinson</td>
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<td>Karen Johnson</td>
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<td>Lynda Jones</td>
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<td>Mary Judge</td>
<td>Business in the Community</td>
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<td>Don Kentish</td>
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<td>Geoff King</td>
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<td>Terry Leather</td>
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<td>Emma Lightfoot</td>
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<td>Tilly May</td>
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<td>Catherine Marks</td>
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<td>Rachel Robinson</td>
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