

## STEERING GROUP MEETING

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010

**Time:** 14.30 - 16.30

### MINUTES

#### Present

Cllr. Di Collins (DC)	Chairman - LSP Board
Catherine O'Connell (CO'C)	Vice Chair - LSP Board
Jacqui Foile (JF)	Chief Officer VAEF
John Houston (JH)	LSP Manager
Derek Macnab (DM)	Chair - Sustainable Communities T & F Team
Penny Smith (PS)	Chair - Safer Communities Partnership
Gill Wallis (GW)	Children's Partnership

#### Notes

David Wright (DW) LSP Administration Support

#### Apologies

Pam Hall (PH)	Chair - Healthier Communities Theme Group
Julie Chandler (JC)	Chair - Children's Partnership
Cllr Anne Grigg (AG)	Chair - Sustainable Communities Theme Group

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#### 1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. In particular, she welcomed Penny Smith to her first meeting, Jacqui Foile, invited to represent the views of VAEF, and Gill Wallis who was deputising for Julie Chandler. There were apologies from Anne Grigg, Pam Hall and Julie Chandler.

#### 2. Minutes of the last meeting (29/06/2010)/Matters Arising

The minutes of the last Steering Group meeting (29/06) were accepted without amendment.

JH reported that the actions raised at the 29/06 meeting had been completed.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes.

#### 3. Update on PRG position

JH spoke to the *PRG Report to the Board* paper which was distributed prior to the meeting to all Board members for comment. Several had been received endorsing the recommendation and none opposing. These Comments were circulated to the Steering Group. The report covered the background, One Epping Forest's response, financial implications and recommendations.

The initial communication from ECC asked the LSPs to model 50% and 75% cuts. OEF decided as a precautionary measure that projects prepare for closure by 30

September although the Children's projects had particular issues with 3 month break out clause in the contracts with commissioned agents. Both OEF and WEP lobbied ECC to apply the cuts on those central projects that were not yet underway and to keep the LSP capacity funding, which was over 6 years, separate from the project funding which was over 2 years. Both of these requests were rejected. ECC had prioritised 3 areas; the apprenticeship programme, support to the Olympics and domestic violence of which only the latter could potentially benefit the district. DM reported that he had met with lead officers and the £250k allocated to promoting the Olympic Games had already been fully allocated and that none was coming into the District.

JH informed the meeting that the funding would be 55% of the original allocation i.e. £398k as opposed to £724k. Closedown costs have been estimated at £408K so a claim of £10K (£408 - £398) has been submitted to the contingency fund (£290K) set up by ECC. There is an LSP Chairs meeting on 2 September to agree the allocation of the contingency fund, however, it is expected that we will be given an indication before then.

JH outlined the main recommendations: to agree to the closure of the PRG projects, to indicate whether the Partnership should continue, retaining capacity resources while a review is undertaken and to explore opportunities to rationalise existing partnership arrangements. JH pointed out that continuing capacity to the end of the financial year could, because of the loss ECC funding, result in an additional cost from reserves of approximately £29k. For the recommendation to explore further opportunities, JH suggested that a Task and Finish team be set up to look at the future role and structure of the LSP and to report back to Board at the next awayday in January 2011. He proposed that the team comprised Caroline Wiggins (SCP), Pam Hall (HC), Julie Chandler (CP), Patrick Arnold (VAEF), Chris Overend (SC), Yvette Wetton (ECC) and someone from WEP.

DC asked JF how the recommendations would impact on VAEF. JF replied that the coordinator for the Supported Volunteers project had resigned under the threat of redundancy. The closing of the Artability project would mean that the coordinator would be redundant and for the community transport project, a driver would have his hours reduced. JF added that while they would like to have kept these successful projects going, and they are looking at other funding opportunities, she supported the recommendation to continue the LSP capacity. VAEF, she said, already collaborated with Harlow so the idea rationalising resources as a West Essex Partnership (WEP) would also be supported.

CO'C said that she supported the coming together of the three LSPs as a WEP as it made sense resource-wise, strategically it would strengthen the LSPs and would fit better with the GPs' Consortium which is likely to cover WE. West Essex, she said, needed a strong voice not just in Essex but in Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire. She added that she thought a WEP could be made to work without loss of the individual districts' identities. GW agreed that the need to retain localism would need to be an important criterion when looking at a WEP.

DM asked what was happening with Harlow and Uttlesford and whether the PCT contributed to these LSPs. JH replied that Harlow was definitely continuing to April at least but was unsure about Uttlesford where the manager covers the LSP as part of her district council duties. CO'C said that the PCT contributed to both LSPs. DC asked how a WEP LSP would be funded next year. DM thought that combined contributions from the three district councils and the PCT would be a good base.

JH said that a reason for retaining a partnership was to address issues such as cost-shunting. CO'C agreed, adding that proposals in the recent NHS White Paper would see areas of NHS responsibility shifting to local government. DM also agreed saying that a partnership was important for informed decision-making.

In response to a statement by PS on funding difficulties, DM thought that funding was an area where joined-up working proved successful e.g. the Future Jobs Fund and Health Works. DC thought that this was an area that should be explored by the proposed Task and Finish team.

JH said that an initial proposal for the current incarnation of the WEP was that it should be a public sector management board and that this is now much more relevant. He said that he thought the WEP should have 3 roles; to be a voice for local communities, to attract funding into the area and to provide a platform for work to make inter-agency efficiency savings. DC questioned how a WEP, as a non-statutory body, could do this, e.g. bid for funding. DM said that central government is not being proscriptive about this and that if we set up something that works (and costs less) then they will support it.

CO'C said that we need to **set out clear criteria for what the Task and Finish team** need to look at. **Action 01 JH**

DM suggested the relationship between a WEP Management Board and a WE Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) needed to be considered. GW said that government was expecting only 40 LEPs nationally and DC added that Essex was looking to join with Kent which had no relevance for the people of West Essex. JH suggested government may be looking for a mixed economy of LEPs i.e. a mix of large and small. DM pointed out that LEPs have to be business led but could not be sure where the 'big players' would come from. CO'C suggested that this may be because the 'big players' cannot yet see the benefit and that we need a 'hook' to bring them in. PS said that for many of the larger companies that 'hook' may be, meeting their targets for local community involvement. JH thought that the development of a business charter may be a way to forge relationships.

**Members agreed the five recommendations** set out in the *PRG Report to the Board* paper but with the fifth recommendation amended to 'Prepare a full report on options for the Board Awayday in January 2011.'

#### 4. **Agreement of the Sustainable Community Strategy**

JH spoke to the *SCS Approval report* paper which was distributed prior to the meeting and to a *Digest of Responses to Community Strategy* paper tabled at the meeting. He asked **members to review the proposed accept/decline decisions** by 20 August. Three issues in particular were brought to the attention of the meeting; higher rise housing, violent extremism and increasing the number of objectives. **Action 02 All**

PS suggested that **West Essex should be given more prominence in the document** to which the meeting agreed. **Action 03 JH**

Once the agreed amendments from the *Digest of Responses to Community Strategy* paper had been **incorporated then the Strategy would be circulated** to the Board for a final time before going to the EFDC Cabinet on 25 October and the Council on 2 November. **Action 04 JH**

#### 5. **Faith representation on the LSP Board**

JH tabled a letter from the Bishop of Bradwell, the Right Reverend Dr Laurie Green to EFDC Chief Executive. The letter proposed the Reverend Brian Surtees replace Reverend Gay Ellis, who is retiring, as the Faith Communities representative on the LSP from the end of October. The meeting, however, considered that it should be left to the Multi Faith Forum to nominate who they wanted to sit on the Board and that **JH should respond accordingly to Dr Green.** **Action 05 JH**

## 6. Open Forum/AOB

JH said that a request had been received for Heather Thirtle to represent the Chamber of Commerce on the Sustainable Communities Theme Group (SC TG). The Chamber had previously been represented by John James and then Louise Sadlers, who because of a change in job left the Chamber and the SC TG in April. **The meeting agreed and PS suggested they also nominate a deputy. Action 06 JH**

JH gave an update on the Stakeholder Conference. It will be on 28 October at Epping Forest College with a theme of 'The Big Society'. **COC said that she would try and get GP representatives to go.** GW asked whether this could be combined with SCP's 'Face the Public' consultation. It was suggested that while there was overlap with last year's 'Shaping the Future' conference, the agendas for this year might be too different, however, it was **agreed that the possibility of combining the two should be explored.** **Action 07 CO'C and 08 JH/CW**

CO'C informed the meeting that the PCT had been asked to make 60% cuts in management over the next 2 years with half of those cuts to be delivered this year. While the PCT would continue to support the LSP, it was inevitable that some LSP things may slip. On the topic of redundancies CO'C asked if there could be cross partner cooperation with vacancies. DM agreed that this would be beneficial and asked **CO'C to supply the PCT HR details** which he would pass on to EFDC HR. JH suggested that this was an area that could be looked at by the T&F team in order to mitigate potential redundancy costs to the public sector and save on recruitment and advertising costs. **Action 09 CO'C**

## 7. Future Meetings

30/09/2010	2-4pm	Cabinet Room	Epping Forest District Council
09/12/2010	2-4pm	Cabinet Room	Epping Forest District Council