

MEETING OF THE BOARD
Tuesday 15 February 14:00 – 16:00
Civic Offices, Epping

MINUTES

Present

Councillor Di Collins (DC)	Chairman
Patrick Arnold (PA)	Assistant Chief Officer, VAEF
Keith Brown (KB)	Federation of Small Businesses
Julie Chandler (JC)	Chairman Children's Partnership
John Houston (JH)	LSP Manager
Derek Macnab (DM)	Acting Chief Executive, EFDC
Councillor Penny Smith (PS)	Chairman Safer Communities Partnership
Colin Thompson (CT)	Representing Town and Parish Councils

Presenting Items

John de Wilton Preston (JP)

Supporting Officers

Colin Rowell (CR)	LSP Administrator
David Wright (DW)	LSP Administrator

Apologies

Jacqui Foile	Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Epping Forest
Pam Hall	Chairman Healthier Communities
Councillor Anthony Jackson	Essex Police Authority
Councillor Valerie Metcalfe	Essex County Council
Paul Thomson	City of London Corporation
Yvette Wetton	Essex County Council
Stephen Wilkinson	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
Simon Williams	Essex Police
Jeannie Wright	Epping Forest College

1.0 Welcome/ New Members/Apologies

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and read out the list of apologies. It was noted that Patrick Arnold was substituting for Jacqui Foile.

2.0 Minutes of the Last Meeting (17/06/2010)/Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. There were no matters arising other than action BO-11/22 -05 concerning the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) reporting. Essex CC have requested further details of amendments requested and this has been supplied.

STRATEGIC ITEMS

1. Budget Update.

Each member gave an update on the financial situation and its impacts on their organisation.

SCP – PS updated members regarding the Community Safety Fund (CSF) The Essex CSF for 2011-12 is £1.115m and for 2012-13, £564k, for resource spending with no capital element. A reduction of 26% for 2011-12 against this years figure had been expected, however, a recent Home Office letter has stated that the CSF must also cover the Young Persons Treatment budget and the DAAT Partnership grant. The awards to CSPs are not ring-fenced. To mitigate the reduction, the SCP is looking at membership, structure, securing priorities (i.e. Crucial Crew, Strategic Analyst and Safe and Sound) and declining or deferring projects not already approved. On the positive side, Essex Fire and Rescue and EFDC have agreed awards to the SCP. PCSOs have been reduced from 6 to 4 but PS thanked the council for their commitment and positive outcome given the funding situation.

VAEF - PA said that while the situation for core funding for next year was not too bad, but the small grants from partners that keep projects such as Mow and Grow running, had dried up and that efforts were being made to find alternative sources of funding.

Town and Parish Councils – CT reported that most councils are under pressure. He said that his parish would suffer as a result of boundary changes which would reduce the population by 16% with the equivalent loss in precept.

Business support – KB reported on the situation with business link. Despite redundancy notices having been served, the East of England Development Agency expects Business Link to provide a full service up to 25 November. Some enterprise agencies are looking to provide services following the demise of Business Link. For example, NWES (Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services) are providing a business support advisor in Maldon with Maldon providing the accommodation in return. KB suggested that this could be a model for Epping Forest District to follow and **that the LSP should meet with NWES**. It was noted that the region had the highest number of start-ups and that start-ups that received early support were more likely to survive.

Action 01 JP

EFDC – DM reported that next year's budget will go before council for agreement on 22 February. The Revenue Support Grant has been cut by 26% over the next 2 years. The effects of this cut, a shortfall of £2.2m, has been mitigated by savings in a number of areas, switching funds and windfalls. Saving £1.2m in 2012-13 will be much more challenging. A community consultation and prioritisation exercise will be undertaken using consultancy offered by Improvement East. DC added that there is to be no increase in council tax or parking charges and that grants to voluntary organisations, e.g. CAB, Homestart and VAEF, will be maintained at this year's rate. Posts have been frozen and recruitment will be done internally wherever possible. DC said that it should also be noted that income from New House Bonus (equivalent to 6 years council tax) is not clear and had not been taken into account. KB said that he was pleased that the VAT increase had not been passed on for parking charges. He also asked what the situation was with Economic Development Officer post. DC said that the post would continue but that the Council was looking to work more closely with Harlow DC on this area.

LSP – JH stated that, as previously reported, the impacts of the 64% cut in PRG funding have been addressed to a small extent by trimming activities such as web-casting and sharing support services with the SCP but the long term future of partnership capacity remained in doubt. The FJF, which brought funding of over £1m into west Essex, finishes in September but the partnership is looking to work with whichever organisation is contracted for the replacement Single Work Programme.

2. Report from WEP Task and Finish Team

The team will comprise senior representatives from each of the partners and be chaired either by the county council or voluntary sector. It is expected to look at removing duplication and bureaucracy with leadership possibly by means of a West Essex Executive. The first meeting will be on 18 February. The team is expected to meet twice and to produce a set of recommendations. A decision is expected soon on whether an application to ECC for funding to support a West Essex Partnership pilot project has been successful. Recommendation for change will be brought to the Board at the earliest opportunity. **Action 02 JH**

3. North London Strategic Alliance

The partnership has helped establish a workshop with colleagues in north London and Cambridgeshire to look at new opportunities for working across boundaries to support economic development. It is hoped 2/3 key areas where work can be mutually beneficial can be identified. A report on outcomes will be brought to the next meeting **Members were asked to raise any relevant issues they would like to see included in discussions.. Action 03 All**

4. Stakeholder Conference

Members were given the opportunity to feedback on the recent stakeholder conference. DC expressed her gratitude to members for their attendance and contributions adding that Eric Pickles MP had been impressed by the attendance and achievements. Members were very positive about the event, the only issues being the length of time allowed for the 6 speakers, the table layout and the length of the workshops.

Members felt that it was important that the issues/ opportunities identified at the conference should be worked up into practical recommendations for action. **Members agreed to the setting up of a Task and Finish team, to be chaired by Jacqui Foile**, to produce a set of recommendations based on the output of the conference. KB said that he would like to be involved. The conference report is expected to be published in two weeks time. **Action 03 JH**

5. Essex Libraries Update

A letter from ECC outlining proposed changes to the library service was distributed prior to the meeting. CT said that Essex provided a flagship service and was leading in responding to the cuts and that it was good to see them looking at sharing services. KB added that the libraries are looking at providing business support services and that this should be considered for an article in the Forester.

OPERATIONAL ITEMS

6. Primary Prize 2011

JH reported that ECC and a private sponsor have agreed to fund the WEP primary prize. The prize is aimed at raising aspirations and is awarded to children who had improved the most and following the success of last year's pilot has the support of Head teachers. It is hoped that more schools will participate this year exceeding the 34 which took part last year.

7. Report from Theme Groups

Oral report from the four Theme Groups.

Children's Partnership

JC said the priority issue for EFCP was lack of resources for intervention work. Funding is to be given directly to schools. There is to be a meeting tomorrow with schools where the issue of sustaining and promoting collaborative working will be discussed. This may be difficult when some of the schools have deficits. This could mean targeted work in

schools and clubs is lost. Work is underway across the partnership to try and secure funding to fill the gaps. CT said that at a recent meeting of the Association of Local Councils, the topic of reaching young people was discussed without resolution, so perhaps the town and parish councils should be tapping into the expertise of the EFCP. **It was agreed that the issue of improving work with town/parish councils should be picked up by the children's partnership. Action 04 JC**

Safer Communities Partnership

PS gave an update on the work of the partnership. The SCP is collaborating with the Youth Council to produce a DVD promoting young persons' personal safety. EFDC Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel's Presentation and Public discussion is to be held at St Mary's Church, Loughton on 8th March at 7 p.m. The topics covered will be the night time economy, licensed premises and the public's role in dealing with issues in these areas. Stuart McMillan, the Essex Fire and Rescue representative and Coordinating group Chair, is taking up a new post covering Chelmsford and Maldon and is therefore stepping down. PS said that he was a valuable and engaged member of the SCP. CT asked whether the SCP would be attending the Neighbourhood Day event to be held in St John's Hall, Epping on 5th March. PS said she was not aware but would find out and ensure effective engagement with the event. **Action 05 PS**

Sustainable Communities

JH reported that the Business Charter is being tested with the Chamber of Commerce and the Carbon Reduction Charter is being developed by EFDC Planning. The Local Transport Plan is going through consultation with one of the options being for hail and ride services for rural areas which CT added the Town and Parish Councils are in favour of. There are 5 employers supporting the use of Credit Unions.

Healthier Communities

DC and DM are to meet with Sheila Bremner, Chief Executive for the three North Essex PCT's (NHS Mid Essex; NHS North East Essex; and NHS West Essex) to discuss issues around changes to health structures, GP Consortia arrangements and partnership working. Pam Hall has asked the Partnership to get involved with the GP Consortium and it was decided to pursue this after the meeting with Sheila Bremner.

8. M11 Alliance/LEP Update

JP outlined the latest position with the M11 alliance and the LEP. The M11 Alliance comprises Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping Forest District looking at economic issues and can be considered as a subset of the Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex LEP. The LEP has a wealth creation focus but governance is an issue with a large main board that needs an executive board below it. There is more business involvement but funding is limited and unclear. The minutes of the inaugural LEP Board meeting and the West Essex Alliance meeting of 13 Jan 2011 will be distributed with these minutes. It was noted that the Insight East item is not yet for public release.

DC reported that she and KB had attended a West Essex Alliance (WEA) meeting which is the new name for the M11 Alliance. Housing is the prime concern around Harlow. DC is the elected representative from west on the Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex LEP. The next meeting of the WEA will need to decide what to submit bids for. DC said that the main issues that the LEP are likely to tackle concern the transport infrastructure from the ports with the Thames and Haven Gateways and the Thames crossing. The Board of the LEP is looking for a chair from a large well known company. It is too big with 44 members and will have to have an executive board of 24 with decision making powers but it is likely that this will have only one district council representative for the whole of Essex. KB added that as well as geographical organisations such as WEA, there are theme groups being set up, e.g. representing rural areas, so we should also look to be represented on these.

9. AOB / Open Forum

JH reported on discussion with the Epping Forest Youth Council on representation on the Board. It was agreed that one representative be allowed plus one observer and that these could be rotated around members of the Youth Council. It was agreed that the agenda will contain a standing item for a report from the Youth Council. **Action 06 DW**

10. Date of Future Meetings

Date	Time	Room	Building
17 May	14:00 -16:00	Committee Room 1	Civic Offices, Epping
6 September	14:00 -16:00	Committee Room 1	Civic Offices, Epping
13 December	14:00 -16:00	Committee Room 1	Civic Offices, Epping