

News from Cllr. Diana Collins
Chairman of One Epping Forest

Dear Colleagues,

It's been another busy and successful few months for our local partnership. A major achievement has been the success of our Future Jobs Bid to central government. This brings local groups together, including many from the third sector, to provide work placements using central government funding to long term unemployed young people. The application by the West Essex Partnership, which includes One Epping Forest, Harlow 20/20 and Uttlesford Futures was confirmed in November. It was one of only two bids from the eastern region that were approved by government and the first young people have already taken up their new placements. The West Essex scheme will eventually offer up to 160 work placements to young long term unemployed people from the area, and involves over 30 local employers who have come together under the umbrella of the local partnership. This will bring in over one million pounds of external support much of it helping provide additional capacity with local voluntary and community groups. Initial discussions have now begun with the Department of Work and Pensions about expanding the scheme with new employers and a greater number of placements. This is really good news for all concerned and demonstrates the partnership delivering real outcomes for local people.

In December One Epping Forest hosted its annual stakeholder conference at Theydon Bois Village Hall. The theme of this years event was refreshing our Sustainable Community Strategy and was the culmination of the 'Your Voice Matters' public consultation, which heard the views of 1,000 residents and groups, about the district and issues we need to address in the future. This was a very successful event with an attendance of more than 100 people and stalls showcasing the work of 15 local organisations. The day got off to an energetic start with an excellent performance from the Groovy Movers dancers of Alderton Junior School. This was followed by presentations by John Houston the partnership manager reviewing the activity of the partnership over the last year and Catherine O'Connor (Chief executive – West Essex PCT) setting the scene for further discussion by presenting a profile of the district. This set out the initial analysis of the feedback from the consultation and data pulled together from all the partners showing the factors generating and sustaining change in the district. All delegates received a copy of 'Shaping the Future' a 60 page data picture of the district. A final draft of the new Sustainable Community Strategy is now being prepared which reflects the views expressed at the conference, resident's priorities and the new data profiles that have been produced. This will then be sent to all stakeholders for final comments before it is adopted.

One of the key messages we have been given by our partners is the need to share information better and help support those local groups bidding for money or planning services to access good quality data. To achieve this the partnership has just launched a Mini Observatory. This brings together for the first time in one place a wide range of data about the area and our people, including demographic facts, survey results, information about crime, and health and profiles of each of the 32 Wards in the district. This is a pilot project at the minute and we would very much welcome your views. You can find the Mini Observatory at http://www.oneeppingforest.org.uk/MiniObs_Main.html

Finally a major seminar is being planned for March organised by One Epping Forest and partners in Harlow and Uttlesford to look at new ways to better join up public services and help to find more efficient ways of working together in the West Essex area. This event will look at how the 'Total Place' approach might help protect frontline services from the impact of anticipated significant reductions in funding as a result of action to reduce the public sector deficit. Senior managers from across the area will be invited to come together to identify services/areas that should be investigated in detail and proposals for pooling resources, knowledge and expertise brought forward for more cost effective, better integrated, and coordinated services.