

MEETING OF THE BOARD
Friday 14th March 2014, 10:00 – 12:00
Civic Offices, Epping

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Chris Whitbread (Chairman)	EFDC
Richard Bassett (RB)	Lee Valley Food Task Force
Dr Kamal Bishai (KB)	West Essex CCG
Cllr Tony Boyce (TB)	Tourism Task Force
Joan Bowerman (JB)	Town and Parish Councils
Quentin Buller (QB)	Tourism Task Force
Andy Fusher (AF)	Essex Police
Ann Haigh (AH)	Multi Faith Forum
Josie Harding (JHa)	Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership
John Houston (JH)	LSP Manager
Cllr Helen Kane (HC)	Portas Funds Town Team (Waltham Abbey)
Derek Macnab (DM)	Deputy Chief Executive, EFDC
Cllr Valerie Metcalfe (VM)	Essex County Council
Brian Page (BP)	Deputy Principal (Interim), Epping Forest College
John Price (JP)	Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce
Paul Thomson (PT)	City of London Corporation
Sandra Valentine (SV)	Jobcentre Plus
Cllr Gary Waller (GW)	Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership

Supporting Officer:

Chris Overend	EFDC
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Apologies:

Julie Chandler	Assistant Director, Community Services, EFDC
Glen Chipp	Chief Executive, EFDC
Jacqui Foile (Vice-Chairman)	Voluntary Action Epping Forest
Cllr Anne Grigg	EFDC
Tracy Harman	Essex Police
Vivien Kelly	LSP Administrator
Brian Mansfield	Essex Fire and Rescue Service
Cllr Brian Surtees	Town and Parish Councils

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

2 Matters Arising

Actions from the Last Meeting

Action 01: The Volunteering Charter was in draft form and would be presented to the next meeting. **Action 01: JH/JF**

Action 02: As a consequence of the limited administrative support available at present it had proved impossible to go ahead with the next Annual Stakeholder Conference, originally scheduled for 21st February 2014. Administrative

resources to support the conference still needed to be identified. However, arrangements for the event would be put in place as soon as practical.

Action 02: JH/JF

Action 03: Barbara Copson was arranging for a group to be established to collect details from the various partners on the equality and diversity information they held and to determine how that could be used and improved upon to better meet objectives in terms of equality and diversity. Organisations to nominate representatives to attend were as follows:

- Epping Forest District Council
- Essex County Council
- Epping Forest College
- Essex Police
- Voluntary Action Epping Forest

Action 03: JH/BC

Action 04: A review of the roles/terms of reference for the Locality Board and One Epping Forest LSP was to be carried out to identify areas where increased working together would be possible.

Action 04: JH

3. Community Safety Presentation

GW reminded the Board that the inclusion of this particular item on the agenda had arisen as a consequence of an article in a local newspaper referring to the District as a 'burglar's paradise'. He said that the presentations to be given by Andy Fusher and Josie Harding were aimed at setting the record straight, disproving the contents of the article and allaying fears. GW added that, whilst the District Council was mainly involved in preventative work, particularly through its Community Safety Partnership, it worked very closely with the Police. The Crucial Crew event held at Gilwell Park each year was an illustration of that, as was its close liaison with the Police Commissioner in carrying out that role.

GW pointed out that the errors in the press had arisen because of the newspaper's use of the Police 'dashboard' figures which were inappropriate and misleading in this instance as, unlike the Home Office figures used by the District Council, they had not been fully processed. The figures used by the newspaper had not taken account of the District's population. Furthermore, the figures had confused domestic burglaries and other types of crime.

In her presentation (copy attached at Appendix A), JH emphasised that the Epping Forest District was in the West Essex Police Area, along with Brentwood, Harlow and Thurrock. The area had actually achieved a reduction in crime in 2014. That reduction had been the 4th best in the county. The overall reduction in the Epping Forest District had been 18% and the District was 11th worst in terms of crime figures, not 1st as stated in the press.

With regard to the misleading article, AF said he had been concerned when he had heard that the reporter involved had asked to speak to him the day before the article appeared and seemed to be trying to get him to criticise not only the Police service in general but the Crown Prosecution Service and the C.I.D. AF accepted that, if you added the figures for Brentwood and Epping Forest District together, it amounted to the highest in the county in terms of crime. However, and as he stressed, that did not represent a true district by district comparison. Nor was there any meaningful correlation between the figures for anti-social behaviour and those for crime in general. Concurring, GW agreed and pointed out that there was an important distinction to be made between fear of crime and the reality.

VM made reference to the anxieties which had arisen regarding the potential for an increase in crime consequent upon the previous decision to switch off street lighting in the vicinity of tube stations between 12 midnight and 5 a.m. VM said that the decision to amend those hours to between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. had done much to allay fears.

JP expressed concerns regarding the decision to reduce the numbers of Police Community Support Officers. JP said that the role they had carried out had proved invaluable and he hoped that there would be a continuation of that role into the future. AF confirmed that there was to be an overall reduction in the county but it was hoped that the existing levels in the Epping Forest District would be maintained or, at worst, there would be a minimal reduction.

AF said that, rather than there having been an increase in crime in the District, the reverse was the case and effective partnership working through the LSP had played no small part in bringing about the significant decrease. Concurring, KB pointed out that home visits by GPs and others helped in identifying domestic violence issues. KB said he was impressed with the figures for the District and the impact of partnership working, expressing the view that these should be publicised more. CW agreed and said that the problems had stemmed from bad reporting and, as such, the various partners should do what they could to rectify the position by spreading the good news about the situation in the District. RB suggested that The Forester be used for this purpose.

Also agreeing about the positive effect of partnership working, GW said the initial increase in levels indicated was the consequence of improved recording methods. He added that, whilst the real number of domestic violence cases was not known because they were often not reported, the reduction in 'repeat' cases was a good indication of the benefit of working together. RB suggested the use of The Forester to promote the good news regarding crime levels in the District. JB considered that to be a good idea but pointed out that she never received a copy of the Forester in the part of the District she lived. JB undertook to supply details of her address so that delivery of the Forester to that household could be guaranteed.

Action 05: JH
Action 06: CO/JB

4. Tourism Task Force

(a) Taking the Tourism Initiative Forward

TB reported on the work carried out by the Tourism Task Force since its inception in 2012. This had included the commissioning of two research reports, a forum for networking and exchange of information and good practice ideas, the Visit Epping Forest website, joint marketing and a more co-ordinated approach to tourism in the District. TB added that the Task Force was also looking into how the District could seek to maximise opportunities and benefits arising from the forthcoming Tour de France which would pass through the District on 6 July 2014. Funding had also been set aside for the appointment of a Tourism Officer, to be recruited shortly, whose main aim would be to ensure that the momentum gathered so far was built upon.

QB concurred about the need to maximise opportunities and cited the Tour de France as an excellent example. He said that, whilst it was not the District's own event as such, the District was one of the focal points and should use that to its advantage. QB said that the Task Force had achieved a lot in a short time and the main elements were now in place. However, there was now a need to develop further the long-term strategy. QB identified the following needs:

- to lobby at County level
- closer liaison with Visit Essex

- multi-agency funding
- greater involvement from businesses, local attractions and hotels
- establishment of a Tourism Board or equivalent as being paramount.
- making more of the District's close proximity to Central London, developing the website and taking it to the next stage
- development of a 'tourist trail' to focus attention on the District
- an annual business survey on tourism

JH expressed the view that the Task Force had provided an excellent return for a small investment. In agreeing with the suggestion for a tourist trail, he said that when a tourist visited one of the District's attractions, they should be given encouragement to visit another.

In conclusion, the Board agreed that the Task Force, or an equivalent, should remain in being as part of One Epping Forest, with revised terms of reference, to take the tourism concept further, with TB in the chair. It was agreed that revised Terms of Reference should be drawn up and to reconvene the Task Force or equivalent to develop and take the tourism concept further in the District.

ACTION 07:JH

(b) Arrangements for the Tour de France

DM said that the District Council was looking at the possibility of celebratory events associated with the Tour de France when it passed through the District on 6 July and was looking to work with others seeking to organise or being involved with such events. DM said that Tom Carne, the Public Relations and Marketing Officer, was co-ordinating arrangements from a District Council perspective. The Board agreed that any partner agency organising or involved with an event should liaise with Tom.

ACTION 08: ALL

5. EFDC Reorganisation – Update

DM provided an update on the reorganisation taking place at the District Council which would come into formal effect on 1 April 2014. DM circulated copies of a diagram illustrating the new corporate structure, one of the aims of which, in its scaling down from 6 to 4 directorates, was to reduce 'silos' and some of the associated traits. A sample copy of the A-Z of Council Services was also circulated. The structure and the list identified which services would fall within the remit of each of the new Directorates of Communities, Governance, Neighbourhoods and Resources. DM reported that the reorganisation would achieve £350,000 savings in a full year but there would be no reduction in frontline services.

6. Reports from Theme Groups

(a) Children's Partnership

JH advised the Board that there had been a report to the Steering Group at its last meeting on the current situation with regard to the Children's Partnership. JH undertook to circulate a copy of that report with the minutes of this meeting of the Board. (Copy attached at Appendix B).

VM said that, at the Epping Forest Youth Strategy Group meeting held the previous day, Gill Wallis had provided a further update and would be attending the next meeting of the Group at which there would be a discussion regarding funding and the priority areas which would have most beneficial impact. With regard to the consultation on the service provision, VM said that it was proposed there would be a reduction to 18 full time posts but much was to be retained e.g. the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. The Board agreed that it would be useful to have a presentation on the proposals at its next meeting.

AH made reference to the situation with regard to Homestart Epping Forest who had been unsuccessful in their bid to the local Clinical Commissioning Group for a further contract from 1 April 2014. Consequently, given that there would be no further funding from health sources, the likelihood was that the Epping Forest Branch of Homestart would have to close in the summer of 2014. VM said that discussions were taking place in an attempt to avert that happening and that Eleanor Laing MP was also looking at ways she might be able to help. VM undertook to keep the Board advised of progress in respect of those discussions. AH was a trustee at Homestart and she and other trustees would be doing all they could to prevent the closure. In the meantime, all the partners on the Board were urged to do likewise.

ACTION 09:VM/ALL

(b) Sustainable Communities

HK reminded the Board that the Waltham Abbey Town Team had been set up following the award of £10,000 Portas funding to the town. Subsequently the Team had been investigating ways in which that funding could be put to most effective use. One initiative which had been agreed was the 'Visit Waltham Abbey' iPhone and smartphone 'app', providing a history of the town, details of events, attractions, business listings and other useful information. JH pointed out that One Epping Forest had been instrumental in helping the Team put the bid together and obtain the funding.

JH advised the Board that the District Council had agreed further funding of £35,000 in 2014/15 towards the Economic Development Initiatives Fund from which Town Centre Partnerships/Teams, the Chamber of Commerce and similar bodies would be invited to bid for grants towards suitable schemes. The criteria would be similar to those which pertained in 2013/14 but also taking into account the objectives of the District Council's Economic Development Strategy, the basis for which had now been agreed by the Council.

JP reported on current initiatives being pursued by the Chamber of Commerce. These included further development of the Visit Epping Forest website, the promotion of One Shops Local (for which it had received funding of £5,000 from the District Council) and the potential combining of the One Shops Local website with that of the Chamber to thereby increase 'visibility' of both. The Chamber was also working with the Loughton Youth Project on the production of podcasts in respect of the One Shops Local initiative.

JH pointed out that, whilst it might not always be directly obvious, the roles of and work carried out by the various groups did inter-relate and impact on one another. He cited the positive impact of both the Tourism and Food Task Forces in terms of employment. Concurring, SV said that unemployment in the District had been reduced and was now at 917. SV said that the lowest level in recent times was 245 in 2007 and she suggested that trying to attain a level even lower than that would be a good aim. SV added that Job Centre Plus was seeking an official commitment from all organisations to reduce unemployment as much as possible through partnership working and would be forwarding further information on this initiative shortly. BP highlighted the College's commitment to reducing NEATS and said that the College would definitely wish to be involved.

ACTION 10: SV

JH informed the Board that Epping Forest College had agreed to host a Business Breakfast in April on the development of Superfast Broadband. Further information would be circulated in due course.

ACTION 11: JH

(c) Healthier Communities

KB reminded the Board that, following restructuring at both the CCG and the County Council, neither was able to provide support to the LSP in terms of the Public Health function at present. However, the CCG was looking to redefine its strategy on healthier

communities and would, no doubt, consider how public health might be provided for within that strategy.

JF reported that VAEF had just recently received funding in respect of the Social Prescription Project. The project was to be 'piloted' at a surgery in Waltham Abbey and, if successful, might be extended to other parts of the District. JF stressed that a key part of ensuring that success was keeping the various databases up to date. AH said that the Rotary Clubs had been involved in assisting 'Dementia' Clubs in Buckhurst Hill on a not dissimilar initiative, and might be able to offer advice and assistance. Accordingly, AH undertook to forward their contact details to VAEF.

ACTION 12: AH/JF

VM said that both the scheme in Buckhurst Hill and the Social Prescription Project were excellent initiatives which recognised the link between social and health needs. VM said she was aware that the Parish Council and the Old Persons' Forum were actively encouraging awareness of dementia and associated issues. DM suggested that it might be appropriate to include reference to the Social Prescription Project in the new Leisure Management Contract. JF undertook to liaise with James Warwick, Sports Development Manager, regarding the potential for the Social Prescription Project being taken into account in the arrangements for the new Leisure Management Contract.

ACTION 13: JF

JH advised the Board that the CCG had approved funding towards the LSP and had indicated the possibility of further financial support in the future. The Board placed on record its thanks to the CCG.

(d) Lee Valley Food Task Force

RB informed the Board that the role of the Task Force had really developed with a significant number of organisations now involved in a wide range of initiatives. Its work was focusing around enabling the long term sustainability and growth of the glasshouse industry, developing food production opportunities close to population centres, and providing employment opportunities to local communities. Other issues being addressed included growing food without any EU or national subsidy, how it might meet increasing national challenges, domestic food production and food security.

RB further reported that the Task Force was also now in close liaison with the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium and the three nearest LEPs on matters of a mutual interest. Confirming that to be the case, JH said that the Task Force was in the course of putting together an integrated bid to SELEP involving numerous partners which, if successful would have a significant long terms beneficial impact on employment.

It was noted that the Essex Skills Board was intending to establish an NVQ on this particular topic.

7. Any Other Business

(a) Business 'Expo' – 20 November 2014

JP provided details of the Business Expo event, which the Chairman ('elect') of the District Council was giving his support to and which would be held at the Marriott Hotel, Waltham Abbey, on 20 November 2014. The event was limited to 40 stands. Any bookings at present were at a concessionary rate of £175 per stand but that rate would increase to £250 from April onwards. JP said that it would be good to see as many LSP partners as possible with a presence at the event.

(b) Venue for Arts and Crafts Event

JP reported that the gourmet restaurant at the Travel Lodge near Ongar was opening soon. The owners were looking for a suitable venue to host a three day arts and crafts event, with involvement from an English company. The idea was to improve links between the Chinese and local community. RB suggested Nazeing Glass might be interested.

8. Dates of Future Meetings

Date	Time	Venue
Friday 6 th June 2014	10:00 – 12:00	Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Epping
Friday 19 th September 2014	10:00 – 12:00	Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Epping
Friday 12 th December 2014	10:00 – 12:00	Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Epping

Actions from This Meeting

Ref	Action	Owner
01	Report progress on Volunteering Charter to next meeting.	JH/JF
02	Arrangements for Annual Stakeholder event to be put in place as soon as practical when administrative support available.	JH/JF
03	Arrange meeting to establish the current position with regard to equality and diversity information held by local agencies and organisations and whether any further meetings are necessary.	BC
04	Review role/terms of reference for Locality Board and One Epping forest LSP to identify areas where increased working together might be possible.	JH
05	Investigate possibility of article being included in The Forester publicising the positive situation to crime in the District.	JH
06	JB to notify LSP of her address so that that delivery of The Forester to that residence can be assured.	JB/CO
07	Revise Terms of Reference and reconvene Task Force or equivalent to develop and take the Tourism concept further in the District.	JH
08	Any partner agency organising or involved with a Tour de France event to liaise with Tom Carne at EFDC	ALL
09	Investigate ways of assisting Homestart. Partners to provide whatever support they can.	VM/ALL
10	Job Centre Plus to provide more information on their request for formal support to reduce unemployment.	SV
11	Further details of Superfast Broadband Breakfast to be forwarded to all partners.	JH
12	VAEF to be provided with contact details of Rotary Club involved with dementia clubs in Buckhurst Hill.	AH/JF
13	Liaise with EFDC Sports Development Manager regarding the potential for the Social Prescription Project being taken in to account in the arrangements for the new Leisure Management Contract.	JF