

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT
LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP**

MINUTES

- Date:** Thursday 7 February 2008 **Time:** 2.00 - 4.25 p.m.
- Present:** Alan Hall (Director of Housing, EFDC) (Chairman of Steering Group and Chairman of Homes and Neighbourhoods Action Group)
Councillor Mrs Anne Grigg (Vice-Chairman of Epping Forest District LSP) (EFDC)
Derek Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive, EFDC)
John Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development, EFDC/Chairman of Economic Prosperity Action Group)
Nick Roberts (Essex County Council) (Chairman of Getting About Action Group)
Nina Sadgrove (Epping Forest LSP)
Caroline Skinner (West Essex Primary Care Trust) (Chairman of Fit for Life Action Group)
Steve Tautz (Performance Improvement Manager, EFDC)
Yvette Wetton (Essex County Council)
Amanda Wintle (Senior Planning Officer, EFDC - For Item 5 only)
Chris Overend (Policy and Research Officer, EFDC)
Clare Butler (Essex County Council) (Essex Leadership Centre) (For Minute 2 only)
Chris Dowsing (Colchester Borough Council) (Essex Leadership Centre) (For Minute 2 only)
Philip Wright (Southend-on-Sea Borough Council) (Essex Leadership Centre) (For Minute 2 only)
- Apologies:** Stuart Ashton (Essex Police) (Chairman of a Safer Community Action Group)
David Butler (Principal, Epping Forest College/Chairman of Lifelong Action Group)
Corinna Hill (Basildon District Council) (Essex Leadership Centre)
Mat Roberts (Superintendent of Epping Forest Open Space Department) (Chairman of Green and Unique Action Group)
Lonica Vanclay (Epping Forest CYPSYP)
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1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Alan Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly those attending from the Essex Leadership Centre. In turn, all introduced themselves and gave details of their background and roles.

2. ESSEX LEADERSHIP CENTRE - 'POWER THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS'

Steve Tautz, Performance Improvement Manager, at Epping Forest District Council, gave a presentation on 'Power Through Partnerships', a group project on the second Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA) he, along with others at the Essex Leadership Centre of Excellence were carrying out at present. The others involved with the project were Clare Butler, Chris Dowsing and Philip Wright (all of them were in attendance) and Corinna Hill who had been unable to attend the Steering Group meeting that day. Steve explained that the Essex Leadership Centre had been set

up in 2004 following a Capacity Building bid to the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by the 15 authorities across Essex. The project, which was sponsored by Paul Warren, Chief Executive of Rochford District Council, centred around communication and awareness raising with regard to LAA2. In that respect, the presentation linked in with several of the other items on the agenda for the meeting. Steve said the intention was to develop and produce an LAA Awareness Toolkit for use by officers and members of local authorities and partners. Steve said that the presentation had already been given to Basildon LSP and the intention was to visit other LSP's in Essex.

Steve advised the Steering Group that the project had involved an assessment of the first Essex LAA. In terms of achievements, it was felt that LAA1 had fostered partnership working, had focussed objectives with allocated funding and had provided regular, formal review of progress with action points in place. With regard to difficulties and areas for improvement identified, it was felt that the 'block' arrangement had unintentionally promoted 'silo' working, and that there had been a varied 'buy-in' from partnership organisations, a perception that targets had not always been closely aligned with true locality needs and poor communication of outcomes.

Steve advised the Steering Group that it was hoped to achieve the following through the project:

- To raise awareness of the significance of LAA2 for Essex, amongst the public, voluntary and community sector;
- To encourage active contribution, involvement and participation in the LAA by all partners;
- To improve understanding of the role of the LAA, and how its requirements and objectives will impact on the future provision of local services;
- To highlight the importance of partnership working, as a joined-up county-wide approach to the delivery of priority outcomes through the LAA; and
- To promote a countywide commitment to the success of the new LAA, to deliver a better quality of life in Essex.

Steve said that the emerging view, through the Group project, was that, for LAA2, there needed to be much more emphasis on local targets and that the communication aspects had to be vastly improved. In advising the Steering Group that the project was to be completed by July 2008, Steve said that they would appreciate the views of others as to what would encourage greater engagement with the LAA, who else should be informed and involved, and details of other groups which might be able to use the LAA Communications Toolkit. In that regard, Steve asked for suggestions at the meeting or, subsequently, by e-mail. Following the presentation, members of the Steering Group commented and asked questions of the Project Group.

Derek Macnab enquired as to the view of Basildon LSP on receipt of the presentation. In response, members of the Project Group said that Basildon LSP's view was that LAA1 had been dictated too much by County Council. However, the Project Group was also of the opinion that local groups needed to be more proactive. Agreeing with this last comment, Alan Hall said that, whilst some of the

criticisms were valid, someone had to 'drive forward' the LAA process for a response to be elicited from others.

In terms of LAA2, Caroline Skinner said that the PCT view was that there were omissions and that there should be more of a focus on Super Output Areas. Concurring with these comments, Steve Tautz said that the emerging view was that the EPAG meeting on 10 December 2007 had been the start of the process. Derek Macnab added that, at that meeting, all the individual partner organisations had been asked to contribute their 'Stories of Place' but it remained unclear as to how those Stories of Place had been used to influence the draft Essex Strategy and LAA2. They suggested that, from an Epping Forest District perspective, there was likely to be support for the twenty-one priorities but with the development of a District "Local" LAA.

Yvette Wetton said that it was acknowledged that there had been a lack of District-based targets in LAA1. In terms of LAA2, Yvette pointed out that some of the identified priorities impacted far more on some areas than others and this was recognised by the County Council e.g. numbers of 'Killed and Seriously Injured' as a consequence of road accidents in the Epping Forest District. Yvette stated that it was these local issues that were of particular significance and the ones the LSP could help identify and provide further information on. Adding to these comments, Clare Butler pointed out that the LAA2 process provided the opportunity for LSP's to indicate their 'slate of issues' and this would be of assistance in that regard.

Philip Wright said there had been suggestions in some instances that partnerships had been consulting for the sake of it on particular issues. Derek Macnab felt there was also a fear on occasions that, if the priorities identified were not followed, then funding would not be released. In that regard, Alan Hall felt there should be a clearer relationship between what was being carried out locally and the 'Reward' element.

Nick Roberts said he was uncertain whether all senior managers throughout the different organisations were actually aware of the importance of LAA in terms of Government thinking. Steve Tautz said this was also an impression the Project Group had gained during research undertaken for the project. Steve added that the Comprehensive Area Assessment would be carried out in 2009 and that would also have a significant impact which both Members and officers needed to be aware of.

Alan Hall said that one cynical view of LAA1 was that it had no real impact in terms of changing the everyday jobs of individuals and was more about the prospect of the Reward element at the end of the process. Concurring with these comments, Nick Roberts said that, in reality, many of the actions incorporated within LAA1, might well have happened in any event but that the LSP mechanism often helped enhance the delivery through bringing partners together to work in a recognised, formalised setting.

Derek Macnab expressed the view that, if the LAA2 could be dovetailed with the Epping Forest Sustainable Community Strategy, it would be of considerable benefit. Derek added that it seemed, at present, that the drafting of LAA2 was more advanced than the Essex Strategy but suggested that it should really be the second document flowing from the first, rather than the other way round.

John Preston also felt that there was no real reflection of the various Stories of Place in LAA2 or the draft Essex Strategy. John pointed out that the Regional Plan was likely to be released after the finalisation of LAA2 yet, in theory, the latter should, at least in part, be shaped by the former, particularly in housing growth terms.

Furthermore, he felt that there needed to be an earlier start in terms of drafting LAA3 and, for the public to be able to appreciate any of the LAA documents, they needed to be written plain English.

Clare Butler said that the Project Group anticipated being able to present its completed project on 10 July 2008. Steve Tautz undertook to ensure the LSP received feedback on the outcome of the project and thanked the Steering Group for allowing his Project Group an opportunity to make their presentation. In reply, on behalf of the Steering Group, Alan Hall thanked the Project Group for their presentation and the provision of the additional information to assist the LSP in its involvement with LAA2.

3. MINUTES (29.11.07)

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2007 were agreed as a correct record subject to the word 'Eastern' in paragraph 1 of minute 5 being amended to read 'Easter' and '2001' in paragraph 2 of that minute being amended to read '2021'.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Chris Overend advised the Steering Group that it had now been agreed, subject to the District Council's IT staff confirming that the arrangements were acceptable, for the preparation, production and distribution of the Board and Steering Group minutes, agenda and reports to be carried out to the Modern.gov system. Subject to that confirmation, training in the use of the system would be included in the induction arrangements for the new LSP Manager.

With regard to minute 2(d), Nina Sadgrove advised the Steering Group that Partners by Design had provided an estimate in terms of the website enhancements. The costs, including software, guidelines, induction and a training session were estimated at £500. It was hoped that any minor maintenance or updating work could be carried out in-house.

Derek Macnab advised the Steering Group that phase two of the EFDC staff restructuring had been agreed by the Cabinet on 4 February 2008, including organisational structures for each of the new Directorates and other services, proposals under the Safer Cleaner Greener initiative, neighbourhood facilities and for a Rapid Response Team.

In relation to the Beacon Council event to be held on 14 February 2008, entitled 'Putting Planning at the Heart of Your Community', it was noted that all the places had now been taken, a member of EFDC Planning Services having been allocated the final place in the absence of any LSP representative being able to attend.

It was further noted that there had been no comments in respect of the draft Partnership Plan submitted to the Board meeting on 21 December 2007. Accordingly, the Partnership Plan as put forward at that meeting, was agreed.

5. RECRUITMENT TO LSP MANAGERIAL POST

Derek Macnab advised the Steering Group that David Butler was still off sick and, given the need to progress this matter, Jacqui Foile and he had met to discuss arrangements for the recruitment to the LSP managerial post. Derek said he was in the course of drawing up a job description and job specification for the post and would be e-mailing copies of the drafts of these for comment, in advance of the job

evaluation exercise. It was proposed that the new post would fall within the District Council's organisational structure, whilst the existing part-time support post and a further additional support post would be VAEF employees. Accordingly, Jacqui Foile would be dealing with the job descriptions and job specifications for the two support posts.

Yvette Wetton enquired how the new arrangements would impact on the performance management of the LSP. In reply, Derek Macnab said he was of the view that there would be a considerable amount of 'steering' of that through the District Council's Performance Improvement Team with respect to LAA2, but would ensure reference was made in the job description.

6. NEW NATIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SET - INVOLVEMENT OF LSP AND DATA COLLECTION

Steve Tautz had circulated copies of schedules setting out details of the New National Indicator Set (District Level Indicators and the National Outcome and Indicator Set).

Steve added that there were many agencies involved in terms of the overall range of indicators and a report was to be submitted to the District Council's Cabinet in March with an accompanying explanation regarding the indicators.

Yvette Wetton enquired whether there were any links with the new "Place Survey" indicators involved and the Tracker Survey. In response, Steve said he was not sure whether there were any links between the two but there was certainly a degree of overlap in terms of the perception of issues involved. Steve said that the information supplied would be branded as a community-base response, with responsibility for data collection and replying resting with the LSP. Steve said that no guidance had been issued as of yet but it seemed likely that the new indicators would be introduced in 2008/09. This would necessitate the LSP carrying out surveys on a two-yearly basis. Steve said that the District Council, when it had commissioned surveys, had tended to look to external sources, but he stressed that the decision would rest with the LSP.

In conclusion, Alan Hall emphasised that there was scope for the LSP to publicise the survey and encourage the return of responses. He said that the LSP would certainly need to look at this issue again once the indicators and the guidelines had been finalised and released.

7. LSP AWAY DAY

Given that it was unlikely the new LSP Manager would be in post prior to the scheduled date, it was agreed that the Away Day presently set for Friday, 18 April 2008 should be deferred.

8. LAA2/ESSEX STRATEGY - CONSULTATION

Members of the Steering Group were asked to comment on the draft LAA2 in terms of the 21 priorities and the 81 (plus 16) indicators proposed. A copy of the guidance notes prepared for the District Council's Corporate Executive Forum on the consultation requirements had been circulated, along with copies of the draft LAA2 and Essex Strategy. Derek Macnab drew the Steering Group's attention to the need to focus on the "Have Regard To" concept explained within the guidance. Derek added that the District Council would be preparing its own response to the

consultation. The LSP would be kept informed of the District Council's deliberations on this matter throughout the process. In terms of its own response, Derek advised the Steering Group that, in determining its view on the priorities and targets, the LSP would be required to reflect these in its own Business Plan/Action Plans and allocate resources accordingly. Derek added that the new Sustainable Community Strategy could be the focus for local issues. Steve Tautz confirmed that the District Council would be finalising its response at the Cabinet on 10 March 2008.

The Steering Group agreed to make no specific comments with regard to any of the 21 priorities or the 81 (plus 16) National Indicators proposed. It considered that, for each of the 21 priorities, there was at least one partner organisation represented on the LSP which would "have regard to" the priority identified. However, it was also agreed that the LSP should reserve the right to comment further on the priorities and targets prior to the final deadline of 31 March 2008. Furthermore, it was felt that sexual health and reducing unwanted teenage pregnancy should be a stand-alone priority within the LAA. Caroline Skinner undertook to provide some wording for inclusion in the consultation response in that regard.

9. LINKING THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

At the meeting of the special meeting of the Steering Group on 10 January 2008 it had been agreed that the LSP needed to commence work on producing a new Sustainable Community Strategy and, as the District Council was embarking on an initial consultation exercise on its Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, to align the two processes. Accordingly, it had been agreed that each of the LSP Action Groups should undertake an initial piece of work, by the end of March 2008, to inform the processes. The Action Groups had been asked to review the "Visions" for their themes within the original Community Strategy and consider whether they were still appropriate and comprehensive, identify and list the current 6-8 key issues relating to their themes, along with any actions/objectives available to help address the issues.

Nick Roberts, as Chairman of the Getting About Action Group, and John Preston, as Chairman of the Economic Prosperity Action Group, reported the outcome of discussions on this issue at their recent meetings, details of which were to be forwarded to Amanda Wintle to inform the initial part of the LDF Core Strategy consultation process. It was agreed that the Chairmen of the other Action Groups should advise Amanda direct of the outcome of their deliberations on this matter, as soon as they had had the opportunity to meet. Derek Macnab suggested that the Stories of Place provided a good starting point for identifying some of the key issues and, indeed, could help form the introduction to the new Sustainable Community Strategy.

10. LOCAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM AND ACORN DEMOGRAPHIC TOOL

It was agreed that Alan Hall, Nina Sadgrove and Chris Overend should meet separately to discuss and progress this matter.

11. LSP CHAIRMAN'S FORUM - 22 JANUARY 2008

The Steering Group noted the contents of a report by Chris Overend on matters discussed at the LSP Chairman's meeting at Benfleet on 22 January 2008. The matters discussed at that meeting had included LAA2/The Essex Strategy, the

Performance Reward Grant, the Terms of Reference for the meeting and '2012 - A Vision for Brentwood'.

12. LSP PREVENTION

Yvette Wetton advised the Steering Group that approval had been received from the Adult Health and Community Wellbeing Management Team to allocate £10,000 for LSP, to support initiatives that were complimentary to the prevention agenda, particularly in terms of helping people to remain in their own homes, or to assist in community engagement, active mental and physical health or the signposting/advertising of universal services. Derek Macnab made reference to the "Fit as a Fiddle" project and Chris Overend suggested that Bridges to Work might be suitable. Yvette undertook to provide copies of the application form and further information on the criteria and, in the meantime, partner organisations with any suggestions for potential use of the available funding were asked to liaise direct with Yvette.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the LSP Steering Group was scheduled to be held on Thursday 22 May 2008 at 2.00 p.m.