

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

**MINUTES**

- Date:** 22 May 2008 **Time:** 2.00 - 4.00 p.m.
- Present:** Alan Hall (Director of Housing, EFDC) (Chairman of Steering Group and Chairman of Homes and Neighbourhoods Action Group)  
Jonathan Baldwin (Essex Police)  
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 Gavens (Epping Forest LSP)  
Caroline Skinner (West Essex Primary Care Trust) (Chairman of Active Epping Forest)  
Steve Tautz (Performance Improvement Manager, EFDC)  
Amanda Wintle (Senior Planning Officer, EFDC)  
Chris Overend (Policy and Research Officer, EFDC)
- Apologies:** David Butler (Principal, Epping Forest College/Chairman of Lifelong Action Group)  
Jeremy Dagley (City of London)  
Bill Grady (Interim Principal, Epping Forest College)  
Karen Prentice (Epping Forest College)  
Barbara Stock (Acting Chairman, Lifelong Learning Action Group)  
Lonica Vanclay (Epping Forest CYPSP)  
Yvette Wetton (Essex County Council)  
Simon Williams (Essex Police)
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**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

Alan Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Jonathan Baldwin (Essex Police) who was attending a meeting of the Steering Group for the first time. In turn, all introduced themselves and gave details of their background and roles.

**2. MINUTES (10.01.08) AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the special meeting held on 10 January 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

With regard to Minute 3 (Local Development Framework and Epping Forest District Sustainable Community Strategy) it was agreed that an item on the timetable for the LDF and the new Sustainable Community Strategy would be included on the agenda for the LSP Board meeting to be held on 12 June 2008. In relation to Minute 4 (Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document), John Preston advised the Steering Group that a report was being submitted to the District Council's Cabinet, at its meeting on 9 June 2008, setting out the District Council's response on this matter. John added that, internally, a specific Planning Officer had been dealing with this matter and a Consultant appointed to work on the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. The view was that the District Council, in its response, should put forward proposals over and above what was envisaged in the East of England Plan

and, in that regard, had publicised the various measures it proposed and was looking to increase the dialogue with the County Council and West Essex PCT. The Government was continuing to press the District Council to provide a timetable for action.

#### **4. MINUTES (07.02.08) AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

Chris Overend advised the Steering Group that the intention was for the production and distribution of LSP agenda, reports and minutes to be dealt with through the District Council's COMS system on the appointment of the LSP Manager.

With regard to Minute 10 (Local Knowledge System and Acorn Demographic Tool), Alan Hall reported that Nina Gavens, Chris Overend and he had met separately to discuss this matter and had put forward a recommendation, subsequently agreed by the Board, that the LSP should not purchase its own information system and that it should be left to individual partner organisations to determine whether they wished to purchase either of the systems for their own purposes.

#### **5. KEY OUTCOMES FROM EFDC LOCAL ELECTIONS AND ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

Derek Macnab reported on the outcome of the District Council election on 1 May 2008. Derek reminded the Steering Group that the District Council held elections by thirds and that approximately one third of the seats had been contested at the election. The results had led to a slight increase in the Conservative majority and the allocation of seats now read Conservative 35, Liberal Democrats 9, LRA 6, BNP 4, Independent 3 and Labour 1.

Derek further reported that it had been agreed, at the Annual Council meeting on 15 May 2008, to increase the number of Portfolio Holders on the Cabinet from eight to nine, with the establishment of an additional Portfolio dealing with Corporate Services and IT and a re-allocation of some functions from Finance and Performance Management to that Portfolio. The Conservative Group now had control over many of the sub-groups. Councillor John Knapman had been appointed Chairman of the Council, with Councillor Penny Smith as Vice Chairman. Councillor Anne Grigg remained as one of the representatives on the LSP, with Councillor Diane Collins replacing Councillor Mary Sartin as the other representative.

#### **6. RECRUITMENT TO LSP MANAGERIAL POST (LSP ADMIN POST)**

Derek Macnab advised the Steering Group that the post of LSP Manager had now been advertised through the Evening Standard and the online (national) Guardian website, other websites and through partner organisations. The post had been evaluated at Range 9 under the District Council's pay scale/grading system. The closing date for the receipt of applications was 6 June, with the shortlisting on 12 June and interviews to be held on 23 June 2008. The appointment panel would consist of Councillor Anne Grigg, Jacqui Foile, Alison Cowie, Yvette Wetton and Derek himself.

## **7. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

### **(a) Production of Final Version**

Derek Macnab reported that, following the meeting of the Essex Partnership Forum on 22 April 2008, the final version (Version 10.1) of LAA2 had been determined and subsequently agreed by the County Council at its meeting on 6 May. It was anticipated that the District Council would formally adopt LAA2 at the Cabinet meeting on 9 June. At a later stage, there would be the signing off of County targets by Government Office East.

### **(b) Targets set by Action Groups**

Chris Overend advised the Steering Group that the LSP had been asked to set its own targets at a District level to reflect the targets within the final LAA2. Accordingly, he had provided a template for each of the Action Groups to use in identifying those priorities and targets within the LAA which fell within their sphere of responsibility, set their own targets to reflect those in LAA2, and identify other actions being taken or proposed to be taken in support of the achievement of the priorities and targets. Chris said that, in addition, the Action Groups had been asked to identify work being carried out which would support the achievement of targets falling within the remit of other Action Groups. Chris said that he had now received several of the responses but urged the Chairmen of the Action Groups still to respond, to reply by no later than 4 June.

Alan Hall suggested that it would be useful to describe the National Indicators as well as identify the numbers. Chris Overend undertook to look into this possibility for inclusion in the final report to be submitted to the Board meeting. Caroline Skinner also felt it would be useful for the Chairmen of the Action Groups, in their responses, to specifically identify those targets which were dependent on partnership working. Furthermore, John Preston pointed out the need for the target leads to be identified and to be mindful of how accessible those target leads were to ensure that there was clear engagement. Concurring with these comments, Jonathan Baldwin felt it important for the LSP to nominate an individual responsible for liaising with the target leads identified in LAA2. John Preston also pointed out that there were certain events which were, to a large degree, outside the control of the LSP and these needed identifying in the responses. Concurring with these comments, Chris Overend said it was unclear, for instance, whether LAA2 took account of the contents of the final version of the East of England Plan. In that regard, Derek Macnab said that there was a certain amount of fluidity within the LAA process and that the targets could be amended in the light of changing circumstances if required.

Chris Overend said that, once all the responses have been received, he would also identify any targets which have been omitted and areas where there was the possibility of duplication.

## **8. REPORTS FROM ACTION GROUPS**

### **(a) Getting About**

Nick Roberts said that one issue, in particular, which the Action Group had been grappling with was that of car parking. Nick added that one of the difficulties for the Action Group was that it was seen very much as a local authority responsibility and balancing the needs of commuters and residents could be problematic. Nick added

that the Action Group was hoping to get TFL involved in their discussions and he was pleased to note that there had been a number of meetings at a District level lately resulting in positive outcomes. In that regard, Derek Macnab pointed out that Councillor Norman Hume, the County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation and Tony Ciaburro, the Service Director for Highways and Transportation, were to attend the next meeting of the Local Councils' Liaison Committee on 11 June to discuss local highway related issues.

Nick Roberts said that the number of accidents involving 'killed and seriously injured' people (KSIs) remained a major area of concern, with the Epping Forest District having by far the largest number in the county. Nick said that Elaine Beckett, who had been appointed as Road Safety Officer and whose area included Epping Forest District, was very proactive and was developing a number of actions and initiatives aimed at dealing with this problem. Jonathan Baldwin said he had been given to understand that part of the problem was that the District had a combination of 'rat runs', primary routes and built-up areas. He added that the Police did have a dedicated unit dealing with these issues, they would prioritise and he hoped to be in a position to come back with a structured response and approach as part of a medium term strategy, in due course. Responding to a query from Chris Overend, Jonathan Baldwin confirmed that there was a significant number of KSIs in rural areas and that these were extremely difficult to police in terms of dealing with traffic offences.

Caroline Skinner asked whether there were many stolen vehicles involved in the KSI incidents. In reply, Jonathan said that was not the case but the Police did monitor the movement of stolen vehicles where possible and took swift action to ensure such vehicles were taken off the road.

John Preston felt that traffic information signs were useful and could be effective but pointed out that there were a number which seemed not to be in operation. In reply, Jonathan Baldwin said that the public information systems were dealt with by County Highways.

Nick said that the Action Group had also been looking at how transport issues linked in with the extended schools agenda. He pointed out that this also impacted on the rural transport issue.

**(b) Economic Prosperity**

John Preston reported that one of the issues dealt with by the Economic Prosperity Action Group at its meeting on 20 May had been Adult Learners Week and how it was being promoted by different partner organisations.

**(c) Active Epping Forest**

Caroline Skinner reported that there had been emphasis at recent meetings on obesity prevention and its links to reducing diabetes. Caroline also made reference to the recent MEND event.

**(d) Green and Unique**

It was noted that Jeremy Dagley of the City of London was currently chairing the Action Group on an interim basis pending the appointment of a new Superintendent of Epping Forest Open Space Department.

**(e) Safer Communities**

Caroline Skinner reported that the Safer Communities Partnership had undergone a 'rebranding' and restructuring of its discussion and decision-making arrangements with changes in respect of a number of sub groups.

**9. EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN**

John Preston reported that the East of England Plan had now been finalised and produced. The final document envisaged that there would be 3,500 extra homes in the Epping Forest District and a contribution to the growth of Harlow (which involved 16,000 extra homes, a portion of which would go to the Epping Forest District). In addition, there was a requirement in the Plan to provide 58,000 new jobs spread amongst the Districts of Braintree, Chelmsford, Harlow, Maldon, Uttlesford and Epping Forest. John said that this would clearly have an impact on employment in the area and would have repercussions in terms of other major developments envisaged, e.g., Stansted Airport.

John said that there were other considerations to take into account, including the infrastructure implications and the question of whether a Harlow bypass would be provided. John pointed out that another deficiency within the Plan was that insufficient affordable housing had been identified. However, despite the shortcomings within the Plan, John emphasised the fact that it was now time to address the issues contained therein. He stressed the need for a wide range of partners to work together to achieve what was required and reiterated the threat of the powers of Harlow Renaissance being extended if that did not occur. In particular, the LSP had a responsibility for dealing with the Plan in terms of its implications for the LDF Core Strategy and, linked to that, the new Sustainable Community Strategy. John said that there were a number of ongoing and proposed initiatives which illustrated that the issues were already being addressed and he cited the regeneration proposals for The Broadway in Loughton as an example.

**10. LINKING THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LDF CORE STRATEGY**

Alan Hall reminded the Steering Group that, as the first stage in the joint consultation arrangements for the new Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, the various 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, and identify and list the current key issues relating to their themes, along with any actions/objectives aimed at addressing the issues. That process had now been completed and, in thanking everyone for their responses, Amanda Wintle said that they would prove very useful.

Amanda Wintle had also circulated a report setting out the fundamental issues arising out of the responses received from the various Action Groups:

- In general, there were very few references to current/emerging LAA and how these objectives etc would help to meet the targets set out in this. This was not specified in the original brief however, so would need to be revisited.
- Few groups had attempted to look beyond the current format of the Action Groups.

- How many of the issues raised were matters that the LSP could have a real impact on? – Many seemed to be a reiteration of (often) statutory functions already undertaken by partners. The role of the LSP should be to add value by bringing partners together.
- Was it over dominated by the District Council and, if so, what could be done to rectify this?
- Very few spatial issues could be drawn from what had been presented so far. It was expected that there would be issues that Planning could only make very small (if any) contribution to, but there was a real lack of spatial implications. The vague issues needed to be further developed to make them more practical/achievable (and SMART) – there was a fine line to be drawn between being “strategic” and being bland to the point of having little meaning – this was a common criticism of the first round of Community Strategies. As this was the LSP there was a need to define issues or objectives in reality.
- The objectives of the new Sustainable Community Strategy should be recognisably distinct to this District, although the District probably shared many similar issues and problems with other districts – the ‘local’ aspect of the LSP was missing.
- A Safe Community (CDRP) and CYPSP – these groups appeared to be ‘ruled’ by a statutory function and little of value appeared to be added by the current LSP format.
- There were several overlaps which might lead to more coordinated working, but could also lead to duplication of effort e.g. addressing anti-social behaviour on public transport appeared both in ‘Getting About’ and ‘A Safer Community’, but had also been highlighted as an issue to be dealt with by the CDRP.
- Homes and Neighbourhoods – this appeared very District Council focused, probably a reflection of the current members of the group. More focus on ‘locational’ issues was required - e.g. was homelessness more of a problem in some areas than others? Suggested ‘neighbourhoods’ issues overlapped again with CDRP and were a reflection of the District Councils ‘Safer, Greener, Cleaner’ initiative. *What value could the LSP add to these issues? There was a need to make clear where advantages can be gained.*
- Lifelong Learning – there was a need for a representative from ECC Schools Service on this group. In addition, Planning was aware of at least three current proposals (St John’s, Epping – secondary and primary; Chigwell Primary School) for redevelopment of school grounds to provide new facilities – were there others in the pipeline?
- Economic Prosperity – many of the points referred to above also applied in respect of this Action Group. The Green and Unique Group had a lot of problems with some of its objectives because they were so blandly worded – e.g. “Actively manage the environment” – this could mean whatever those reading it wanted it to mean, and unfortunately the issues suggested this time by Economic Prosperity rather fell into the same ‘basket’.

Given that LAA2 was fundamental, Derek Macnab suggested that, in developing and delivering its new Sustainable Community Strategy, the LSP might need to restructure its discussion and decision-making arrangements to reflect the 'groupings' in LAA2 (i.e., Our People, Our Communities, Our Economy, and Our World). Indeed this point had been brought out through the responses Amanda had received from the Action Groups. Alan Hall felt that would certainly be a good starting point for the discussions on the two new strategies but also pointed out that, if the LAA changed, the LSP might have to restructure again.

With regard to the lack of feedback on spatial planning issues, Caroline Skinner suggested that Action Groups might not be the appropriate level in every instance for determining a response. Whilst accepting that to be the case, Alan Hall pointed out that, even when decisions were taken at a Board or Steering Group level, feedback was often to and from the Action Groups. In that regard, Alan felt that the Hambleton Council presentation to be given at the forthcoming event at Thornwood might prove useful. Chris Overend expressed the view that one of the difficulties faced by the Action Groups in determining their responses was that they had dealt with the matter from an aspirational point of view, whereas the Core Strategy was really concerned with what was readily achievable. In that regard, however, Amanda Wintle felt that even if good ideas were not easily achievable, they could still be taken forward through the processes for the development of both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LDF Core Strategy.

Amanda said that a number of processes were in place to inform the LDF Core Strategy and it was anticipated that there would be a report to the District Council's Cabinet in July setting out a timetable for the development of the Core Strategy, which envisaged formal consultation in autumn 2008, a further round of consultation during the summer of 2009, the likelihood of the Examination in Public in 2010 and finalisation in 2011. Amanda pointed out that there would come a time when it was necessary to determine whether there would have to be separate arrangements for assessing the implications of growth envisaged in Harlow.

The Steering Group agreed that the next Away Day, previously deferred to facilitate finalising the arrangements for the recruitment of an LSP Manager, would be significant in terms of shaping the way ahead. Now that those arrangements were in place, potential dates could be identified. Alan Hall considered that it would be useful to have a wider participation at the event than had previously been the case. Concurring with these comments, John Preston suggested that the other public service entities should be invited to submit their views. Jonathan Baldwin also felt such an approach would be useful but that individuals should be given the opportunity to comment in advance of the Away Day. Accordingly, the Steering Group agreed to target key individuals from partner organisations to seek their participation in the Away Day. It was also agreed, given the need to meet in advance of the six week public consultation period for the LDF Core Strategy, that September would be a suitable time for the Away Day to take place. Nina Gavens and Chris Overend undertook to identify potential dates and report in readiness for further discussions on the matter at the LSP Board meeting on 12 June 2008.

#### **11. WORKSHOP ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND PREPARATION OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

The Steering Group noted arrangements for the event at Thornwood Village Hall on Friday 20 June 2008 targeted at Parish/Town Councils and the LSP partners, at which representatives from Hambleton Council would be present to outline a model used to link the LDF and development of a new Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **12. RESOURCES APPLIED TO LSP ACTIVITIES**

Chris Overend advised the Steering Group that, arising out of discussions at the Essex LSP Chairmen's Forum, each District LSP had been asked to provide information on the resources applied locally for work specifically in connection with LSP activities. Chris said that he was preparing a report for the Essex Forum on this matter for which he required responses from key individuals on the Board, Steering Group and individual Action Groups. He had forwarded a note explaining the information requirements and had already received a number of responses. Chris emphasised the need for the remaining responses to be with him by no later than 4 June.

## **13. LSP ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

Derek Macnab reported that the advertisement for the further post of LSP Administrator had now been published. Confirming this to be the case, Chris Overend said that the shortlisting would be carried out on 10 June, with interviews being held on 17 June 2008.

## **14. ITEMS FOR LSP BOARD MEETING - 12 JUNE 2008**

Items identified for the next Board meeting included the following:

- (1) East of England Plan – to note receipt;
- (2) Local Area Agreement 2 – to note finalisation and receipt of pro formas from Action Groups;
- (3) Funding Report;
- (4) LDF Core Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy -
  - (a) Comments from Action Groups;
  - (b) The way forward and LSP Away Day;
  - (c) Arrangements for LSP workshop - 20 June 2008.

## **15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the LSP Steering Group was scheduled to be held on Thursday 4 September 2008 at 2.00 p.m.