

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

MINUTES

- Date:** 4 September 2008 **Time:** 2.00 - 3.35 p.m.
- Present:** Alan Hall (Director of Housing, EFDC) (Chairman of Steering Group and Chairman of Homes and Neighbourhoods Action Group)
John Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene, EFDC and Chairman of Safer Community Partnership)
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)
Caroline Skinner (West Essex Primary Care Trust) (Chairman of Active Epping Forest)
Paul Thomson (Superintendent – City of London – Epping Forest Conservators)
Simon Williams (Essex Police)
Amanda Wintle (Principal Planning Officer, EFDC)
Chris Overend (Policy and Research Officer, EFDC)
- Apologies:** Teresa Glynn (Chairman, Lifelong Learning Action Group)
Barbara Stock (Acting Chairman, Lifelong Learning Action Group)
Peter Sadler (Principal, Epping Forest College)
Lonica Vanclay (Epping Forest CYPSP)
Yvette Wetton (Essex County Council)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Alan Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Paul Thomson who, following his recent appointment as the new Superintendent of Epping Forest, 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 (22.5.08) AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

3. LSP MANAGER

Derek Macnab advised the Steering Group that, following the advertising of the post of LSP Manager through the Evening Standard, various on-line national websites and through partner organisations, 19 expressions of interest had been received, with 11 applications received and five people shortlisted. Three of the shortlisted applicants had subsequently withdrawn prior to the interviews on 23 June 2008. Neither of the applicants interviewed had met the criteria in the job description or specification sufficiently for an appointment to be made. Although it had been impossible to make an appointment, it had been agreed not to re-advertise the post straight away in view of the impending summer period and the difficulties of recruiting at that time of year.

Derek Macnab further advised the Steering Group that he was to submit a report on this matter to the Board meeting on 25 September 2008. That report would look at three options and these were, namely, to re-advertise the post, the appointment of a consultant to undertake work on the preparation of the Community Strategy but with a view to the appointment of a manager in the near future, or the appointment of a manager on an agency basis. Derek added that Chris Overend had been covering some of the role on a pro tem basis particularly in terms of the LAA 2 process. Nina Gavens had now taken up a post with the newly established FAIR project at VAEF but administrative support for the LSP remained available as Colin Rowell was now in post as the part time LSP Administrative Assistant following interviews on 17 June. It was still the aim to recruit a replacement for the post vacated by Nina Gavens.

John Preston said that he was aware of a specialist recruitment company by the name of Cheetham Hall which might be able to assist and advise in this matter. Caroline Skinner suggested that the PCT might be able to offer the services of a graduate and she undertook to look further into this possibility. In response, Derek Macnab said he would welcome any suggestions and would look into their feasibility.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN – LSP BOARD AND STEERING GROUP

Derek Macnab reported that the LSP Constitution required the appointment or re-appointment of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen for both the Board and the Steering Group on a two-yearly basis. Nominations for these two positions on the Board were to be considered at its next meeting on 25 September 2008. However, given the likelihood that the LSP structural and constitutional arrangements would be reviewed and revised in the coming months, it was agreed that there should be no change to the position of Chairman of the Steering Group at this stage. Accordingly, the Steering Group confirmed the appointment of Alan Hall as Chairman pending that review of the constitutional arrangements. The Steering Group agreed the appointment of John Preston as Vice Chairman for that interim period.

5. LSP AWAY DAY AND COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

Derek Macnab advised the Steering Group that the Away Day was to be held on Wednesday 8 October at Theydon Bois Village Hall. Catherine O'Connell, Nina Gavens, Alan Hall, Colin Rowell, Chris Overend and he were due to meet the next day to carry out a scoping exercise to determine an agenda and the structure for the event. In recognising that the structural arrangements might well be revised in due course, Caroline Skinner expressed the view that any priorities determined at the Away Day would still need to take account of the existing Action Group structure and, indeed, the composition of each of the Action Groups and resources at their disposal. Caroline felt that, whilst there would inevitably be a focus on LAA 2, the discussions should also cover wider issues. Simon Williams concurred with Caroline's view that structural arrangements on a geographical basis often worked better than when a thematic approach was adopted. Alan Hall suggested that a mixture of approaches might be appropriate in certain instances. Whilst agreeing that the discussions should go beyond the Local Area Agreement, Derek Macnab pointed out that considerable amounts of money were being channelled through the LSP as part of the LAA 2 process. The Steering Group agreed that having a facilitator had worked well at previous Away Days and that it would be preferable to have one for the 2008 event.

Derek Macnab advised the Steering Group that the Community Conference was due to be held at Murray Hall, Loughton on 21 January 2009. John Gilbert pointed out that there was now a statutory duty to consult on community safety issues in the District. The Steering Group agreed that the consultation arrangements on community safety could be combined with the arrangements for the Community Conference. John Preston stressed the need to publicise the event extensively to ensure that it attracted a wide audience and there was involvement from a range of individuals and different perspectives.

6. NATIONAL INDICATOR SETS – PLACE SURVEYS

Members of the Steering Group had, before them, copies of the draft letter and accompanying Epping Forest Place Survey, it was proposed to send out to Epping Forest residents as part of the National Indicator Set “Place Survey” to be carried out during the autumn of 2008. Derek Macnab reminded the Steering Group that this had historically been carried out collaboratively with other Essex local authorities using the company BMG to deal with the distribution and collection of results. Similar arrangements were to apply in respect of the 2008 Survey and Derek Macnab advised the Steering Group that BMG would be responsible for ensuring the required 1,000 returns were received from Epping Forest residents and that returns were received from a range of individuals from different age groups, backgrounds, gender etc. Derek drew attention to the fact that, as agreed, the letter had been branded using the LSP logo. Members of the Steering Group were now asked for their final comments in respect of the letter and the Survey. Derek Macnab added that the results from the Survey were anticipated to be available towards the end of November 2008.

Simon Williams enquired as to how the results of the Survey would be used once they became available. In reply, Derek said that the District Council and its partner bodies, through the auspices of the LSP, would be assessed in terms of performance under the forthcoming Comprehensive Area Assessment. The results of the Survey would provide a base-line and the expectation would be that improvements were being made when assessed against that base-line. Simon pointed out that the questionnaire was very much focussed on local authority service provision and limited in terms of the Police Service. He suggested that it would be beneficial if more Police-orientated questions could be developed in the future. Concurring with these comments, Derek Macnab undertook to pursue the possibility of more questions dealing with Police matters being added at a later stage.

John Gilbert pointed out that the word “Council” used in the letter needed to be pluralised given that services in the District were also provided by Parish/Town Councils, the County and District Council. The Steering Group also agreed with John Gilbert’s suggestion that Italian needed to be added to the range of languages used in the Survey, given the number of residents of Italian extraction living in the District. The letter and accompanying questionnaire were otherwise agreed for use in the forthcoming Place Survey.

7. ESSEX LAA 2

Chris Overend advised the Steering Group that, in terms of the LAA 2 process, the stage had been reached where the initial bids for which PRG was being sought, had now been submitted. The deadline for the receipt of those bids had officially been Monday 1 September but the Essex Partnership had indicated that a certain amount of flexibility was available so that any further bids finalised within the next few days or so might also be considered.

Chris Overend had circulated a report listing the bids relating to the District submitted by the LSP itself or the Thematic Partnerships. Chris pointed out that, where the bids were being made by the Thematic Partnerships, the LSP's support was being sought. The others were specific bids through the LSP which, if ultimately agreed by the Essex Partnership, would be met through the LSP's indicative allocation of PRG monies. Chris reminded the Steering Group that the indicative allocation to the Epping Forest LSP was £453,000 which would be available for spending during the 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years.

Chris Overend further reported that it was presently anticipated that the final decision as to which bids would go forward would be taken on 30 September 2008. Before that date, the LAA Target Leads would hold discussions with the LSP Leads on any issues arising in respect of the bids and look to resolve those issues. There would also be a series of workshops during September involving the Target Leads, and the various LSP managers or equivalent throughout Essex, looking at a number of elements including quality assurance, risk management and equalities and diversity. Chris said that the processes involved at those workshops would also identify aspects of the bids for which further information would be required. Indeed, he considered that those processes might lead to the elimination of some of the bids as that they might consequently be considered unsuitable. The bids put forward would then make their way, via consideration by the Essex Partnership Management Board, for determination ultimately by the Essex Partnership itself on 28 November. Members of the Steering Group were now asked for their comments in general in respect of the bids being submitted relating to the Epping Forest District and for other targets in respect of which it was considered bids might be suitable.

Nick Roberts said that there had been a discussion on this matter at the recent Getting About Action Group and it was felt that one area which stood out as lacking in terms of a bid was that in respect of NI 47 (Killed and Seriously Injured on Essex Roads) (KSIs). This was an area in which, despite the recent significant improvement, Epping Forest had traditionally performed poorly, being significantly worse than other Districts in Essex. Nick said that Elaine Beckett, the Road Safety Officer and he would be speaking further on this matter and would raise the possibility of a bid being submitted, through Rosemary Welch, the County's Network and Safety Manager and Target Lead for NI 47.

Derek Macnab made reference to the fact that there was no specific Epping Forest bid in respect of reducing the "carbon footprint". In response to a query from Alan Hall as to whether a bid relating to the LDF Core Strategy had been considered, Amanda Wintle said that she had looked into this possibility but it had proved difficult determining how such a bid might be pitched.

Chris Overend pointed out that the list included a reference to Netcuda, a social enterprise organisation which provided loans and assistance to disadvantaged individuals. At this stage, however, there was no formal bid and whether one was formalised and submitted would depend on discussions between Netcuda and the relevant Target Leads proving productive. John Preston said that the organisation concerned had given a presentation to the LSP a number of years previously and that, for a meaningful bid to be submitted, Netcuda would have to carefully marshal its arguments in terms of how its services would meet the relevant targets and the LAA 2 criteria in general.

John Preston expressed the view that the LAA process was complex and complicated and that, even though a number of potential project bids had been

identified which might ultimately be approved or rejected, they required commitment in terms of delivery even at this, the bidding stage. Agreeing with these comments, John Gilbert also pointed out that the indication had been given by the County Council that any money approved would probably be released late in the 2009/10 financial year. Thus any schemes due to commence in the earlier part of that financial year might require a degree of “front-loading” from other funding sources. Whilst accepting the validity of these comments, Derek Macnab said that it was the LSP’s responsibility to use the LAA to process and ensure it did not undersell itself in terms of bids submitted.

John Gilbert pointed out that many different groups and organisations had received copies of and were submitting comments in respect of the Green Paper on Policing. He suggested it would be useful to be able to look at the range of responses from those different organisations. Supporting John Gilbert in these comments, Simon Williams said that Essex Police would be responding and would, no doubt, have its own stance in relation to the Green Paper.

Chris Overend pointed out that it was not entirely clear whether, in instances when the LSP was merely supporting a bid from a Thematic Partnership, and that bid was ultimately successful, any funding amount agreed would be met entirely from the Thematic Partnership’s indicative allocation or there would be an apportioned amount to be met from the LSP’s indicative allocation. Chris Overend undertook to seek clarification on this from the County Council and the degree of flexibility available in terms of the submission of further bids. Subject to this clarification and the further points made at the meeting, the Steering Group agreed the submission of initial bids as presented at the meeting.

8. REPORTS FROM ACTION GROUPS

(a) Economic Prosperity

John Preston made reference to the discussions at the Economic Prosperity Action Group meeting on 2 September regarding the Shell Step Awards, the various categories covered and, in particular, the student scheme which had been running for a number of years. John said that the awards were now run through Business Link and there was more public sector involvement in general. He undertook to provide more information in respect of the awards, to accompany the minutes of the meeting.

The Action Group had also discussed the recently released document and the District Council’s initial response on ‘Sub-Regions in the East of England – EEDA’s Role in Partnerships and Engagement’. The Action Group had considered the position of the District in terms of a number of recognised sub-regions such as the M11 Corridor, the Haven and Thames Gateways and the London Arc. The Steering Group agreed that it would be appropriate for it to comment on the document and, accordingly, John Preston undertook to prepare a draft response for consideration by members of the Steering Group.

(b) Getting About

Nick Roberts said that the focus of the discussions at the meeting on 1 September had been on KSIs and the significant recent improvement in the Epping Forest District with a 25% reduction. Nick said that the improvement had been noted with thanks to the Police for the considerable amount of work they had undertaken in liaising with Elaine Beckett, the County’s Road Safety Officer for this part of Essex. It had been suggested that the District Council might be able to further assist the

improvement process through publicity. The District Council's Overview and Scrutiny system had also been identified as a way of encouraging debate and improving the statistics, although it was recognised that any presentation made to District Council members would need to include meaningful recommendations for positive action.

(c) Fit for Life/ Active Epping Forest

Caroline Skinner reported that the Action Plan was to be reviewed at the meeting to be held later in September and the involvement of all partners both in terms of the LAA 2 option aspects and in general terms was also to be reviewed. Caroline added that the GPs Practice-Based Commissioning Body was now represented on the Action Group and it was anticipated its involvement would prove to be both welcome and useful.

(d) Epping Forest CYPSYP

Caroline Skinner advised the Steering Group that the structure of CYPSYPs was being looked at vis-à-vis that of the Local Development Group.

(e) Green and Unique

Paul Thomson said that he had been in post only a few days. Paul anticipated, after a settling-in period, that he would in due course take over the Chairmanship of the Action Group.

(f) Lifelong Learning

Chris Overend advised the Steering Group that a report on recent lifelong learning activities had been received from Barbara Stock. Teresa Glynn, Essex ACL, had now taken over the chairmanship of the Group. A Neighbourhood Fund outreach project, coordinated by Barbara Stock, with leading partners Epping Forest College and Epping Forest District Council and support from other partners, had been successfully completed in July 2008. The community outreach project had delivered skills for employment to more than 100 unemployed and new learners between January and July 2008. A further report on that project was available on request. The Lifelong Learning Action Group had taken on the role of PCDL (Personal Community Development Learning) mapping and planning body, led by Teresa Glynn and co-ordinated by Jocelyn Jordan from Essex ACL.

(g) Homes and Neighbourhoods

Alan Hall reported that the next meeting had been rescheduled to be held towards the end of the week commencing 8 September 2008.

9. ITEMS FOR LSP BOARD MEETING – 25 September 2008

Items identified for the next Board meeting included the following:

- (i) LSP Away Day;
- (ii) LAA 2 – Progress Report
- (iii) LSP Manager – Appointment – Options

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Local Development Framework

Amanda Wintle advised the Steering Group that, as a consequence of the need to carry out work in respect of the Options Appraisal around Harlow prior to public consultation, the timetable for the Local Development Framework had been put back. The need to reschedule that timetable might also impact on the arrangements for the consultation on and production of the new Sustainable Community Strategy. Amanda confirmed that Hertfordshire County Council had applied for a judicial review and that East Hertfordshire District Council were unwilling to take the matter forward until the outcome of that review was known.

(b) Training on the Chairing of Meetings

John Preston reported on a recently held training event on the chairing of meetings in respect of which, all attending agreed as being extremely useful.

(c) Blunts Farm, Theydon Bois – Planning and Enforcement Issues

John Preston reported that Jonathan Baldwin of Essex Police and he had met on site to discuss this matter, as a consequence of which a number of excellent suggestions for dealing with the issue had emerged. John said that the meeting with the Police had been an excellent illustration of good partnership working and he expressed thanks to the Police for their involvement and help on this matter.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the LSP Steering Group was scheduled to be held on Thursday 27 November 2008 at 2 pm.