

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TASK AND FINISH
PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 24 JULY 2006
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 9.10 PM

Members Present: Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), Mrs P Smith (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Cooper, Mrs J Lea, A Lee, Mrs J H Whitehouse and J M Whitehouse

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: Mrs S Clapp

Officers Present J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), C Overend (Policy & Research Officer) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in attendance:

1. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

Noted that there were no substitute members.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor Mrs M Sartin declared a personal interest by virtue of being one of the Council's Member representatives on the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership. She declared that her interest was not prejudicial and she would remain in the meeting.

3. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Panel were asked to determine the scope of their work and produce a Terms of Reference. The Panel had before them a copy of the government consultation document entitled 'Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) – Shaping their future' and the request form submitted to the OSC in May 2006 which led to the setting up of this Panel.

The Joint Chief Executive (Community) reported some background. He referred to the aims and visions behind the Partnership set out in the Community Strategy 2004 - 20. He referred to funding arrangements and unease over the alleged democratic deficit in the LSP which the proposals sought to address through giving local authorities a greater role.

The Panel noted the consultation contained significant proposals which sought to pass responsibility for the LSP as a whole to the Local Authority Executive. It also indicated greater involvement in the partnership for Cabinet and 'backbench' ward members and that the Community Strategy should be a 'sustainable community strategy' be coterminous and closely linked to the new development planning framework which the Council had to produce.

Important questions for determination were the opportunities the proposals presented the Council, its future role and how it was to carry out this new role.

The Governments recommendations would be published in the Local Government White Paper expected in November 2006, however it was for Local Partnerships to determine how they wished to carryout the proposals.

It was reported that the Council's Member representatives for this year on the District LSP were the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development Councillor Mrs A Grigg and the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Protection Councillor Mrs M Sartin. It was also reported that many of the Partnership's themed action groups were chaired by EFDC Heads of Services and other key agencies including the Police and PCT.

Reference was made to the County LSP which would deliver the Local Area Agreements and current views on whether the County Strategy should be made up of District LSP strategies.

It was reported that the Partnership had its own performance targets and a performance framework. The Partnership did not have a budget but was funded by donations from the constituent agencies who received money directly from successful bids. Under the new role envisaged, responsibility for the aims and funding for the LSP would rest with the Council.

The Epping Forest LSP liaised with the Harlow Partnership but not other LSPs in the region as there was little common ground between the diverse areas covered. Noted that Aidan Thomas who chaired the co-ordinating group for the District LSP would be able to comment on liaison arrangements between partnerships.

The LSP network was to hold a meeting in Newmarket in November 2006 about the government consultation which the Panel might wish to attend.

The Panel asked whether the LSP meetings were open to the public? They also expressed a wish to attend action group meetings. The Policy and Research Officer undertook to find out when the next action group meeting was, indicate their wish to intend and report back to the Panel.

The Panel wished to identify how the Partnership currently worked, its purpose, structure, strengths and weaknesses, how it was held accountable and its complaints procedures.

The Panel wished to go through the issues identified in the Government consultation document and the Local Government White Paper expected to be published in November 2006 and the implications of the Council taking a lead role.

The Panel wished to consider the nature of the work that should be carried out, how the Sustainable Community Strategy was to link with the Council's Local Development Framework and other local plans, who should be involved and how Portfolio Holders and back bench Members could be more involved in the Partnership.

The Panel wished to identify publicity arrangements and how to enhance arrangements for involving residents and groups in the work.

The Panel wished to considered the performance monitoring arrangements and targets the for LSP and secretariat support.

The Panel wished to review the Local Area Agreements and how it was to be implemented locally.

The Panel wished to consider the relationship between the District LSP and other Partnerships in the region including the County's.

The Panel wished to identify the partners involved, how they were organised in view of the changing environment and consult with such interests any proposals for change.

The Panel wished to consider the Council's involvement with other partnerships and how the issues identified could be applied to these relationships.

The Panel noted that any bids for new money would be need to be made before the end of September 2006 for the 2007/08 year.

The Panel wished to received the following documents

Epping Forest LSP Community Strategy 2004-2020
LAA – updated copy of Local Area Agreement
LSP response to consultation paper
Induction pack for new Members
Details of structure showing relationship of LSP Board to Steering Group and Action Groups and Membership of each.
Constitution, Terms of Reference for LSP Board, Steering Group and Action Group.

ACTION:

The Policy and Research Officer to make available to the Panel the documents requested;

The Policy and Research Officer to identity and report to the Panel dates for forthcoming District LSP action group meetings and make arrangements for any meetings they wish to attend.

Democratic Services to produce Terms of Reference.

4. WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel agreed that a meeting should be arranged for 30 August 2006 at 7.00pm.

The Panel requested that this next meeting be attended by Aidan Thomas, the former Chairman of the Epping Forest LSP, David Butler, the current Chairman and Marina Sherriff the Community Strategy and Partnership Manager.

Agreed that a further meeting be arranged for 27 September 2006. Agreed that representatives of the Partnerships and the EFDC officers involved with the Action Groups be invited to this.

Agreed that a meeting also be arranged for 25 October 2006.

ACTION.

Democratic Services to invite the representatives indicated to next meeting and produce work programme.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting was agreed to be held on 30 August 2006 at 7.00 pm and then on 27 September and 25 October 2006.