

## **Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda**



### **Local Strategic Partnership Task and Finish Panel Wednesday, 30th August, 2006**

**Place:** Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Democratic Services Officer:** Zoe Folley - Research and Democratic Services  
Tel: 01992 564532 email: zfolley@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

**Members:**

Councillors Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), Mrs P Smith (Vice-Chairman), Mrs S Clapp, Mrs A Cooper, J Demetriou, Mrs J Lea, A Lee, Mrs J H Whitehouse and J M Whitehouse

**PLEASE NOTE THAT A PRE – MEETING BRIEFING WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS OF THE PANEL AT 7.00 PM IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2**

**MEMBERS ARE ALSO REMINDED TO BRING TO THE MEETING THEIR COPY OF CONSULTATION DOCUMENT - LSPs: SHAPING THEIR FUTURE AND THE PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED INFORMATION PACK**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

(Head of Research and Democratic Services) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before

an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

**4. NOTES OF 24 JULY 2006 MEETING (Pages 3 - 6)**

Attached.

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 7 - 10)**

Attached.

**6. DISCUSSION WITH EPPING FOREST LSP AND REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PAPER (Pages 11 - 14)**

Aidan Thomas and David Butler of the Epping Forest LSP to report.

The Panel are asked to bring to the meeting their copy of the consultation document - LSPs: Shaping their future for consideration. A copy of the Epping Forest LSP response to this paper is attached.

The Panel are also asked to bring to the meeting their pack on the local partnership which was circulated under separate cover.

**7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Next meetings - 27 September 2006 7.30 CR2 and 25 October 2006 7.30 CR1

**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:**

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**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 consider the performance monitoring arrangements and targets 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 identify 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.

**Term of Reference:**

To consider the set up and operation of the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership and formulate recommendations on its future in light of the government consultation paper 'Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their Future' and the Local Government White Paper expected in November 2006.

**Aims and Objectives**

1. To identify the purpose of the Epping Forest LSP, its work, structure, way in which it is held to account, current strengths and weaknesses and the partner agencies involved.
3. To consider the current and future role and involvement of the Council.
4. To consider the nature of the work to be carried out by the Partnership including how the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy is to be linked into the Local Planning Development Framework and other local plans in the context of the government guidance.
5. To consider who should be involved in the organisation, who should attend meetings; ways to increase involvement from residents and groups and publicity arrangements for initiatives.
6. To review the Local Area Agreement and how it should be implemented locally.
7. To consider the District LSP's relationship with the County and other LSP's in the region.
8. To consider available resources, secretariat support, performance monitoring targets and arrangements.
9. To consider how to ensure greater Portfolio Holder and 'back bench' Member involvement in the Partnership and the future role for Scrutiny.
10. To consult and agree with the partner agencies any recommendations for change.
11. To identify by the end of September 2006 any recommendations that require extra spending.
12. To consider the Council's involvement with other Partnerships and how any issues identified could be applied to these relationships

TASK AND FINISH PANEL PLANNING FORM:

**Information required:**

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.

<b>TIMESCALE</b>	<b>ESTIMATED</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>
Commencement	July 2006	
Finish		
Report.	May 2007	



LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TASK AND FINISH PANEL: WORK PROGRAMME

Proposed Date	Item	Current Position
24 June 2006	Scoping and Terms of Reference setting.	Terms of reference and work plan formulated
30 August 2006	Discussion with LSP – Chief Executive David Butler, Aiden Thomas and Marina Sheriff	
27 September 2006	Discussion with EFDC officers involved in LSP sub - groups and representatives of partner groups.	
25 October 2006		

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24<sup>th</sup> February 2006

LSP Consultation  
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
Zone 5 K10  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

Dear Sir or Madam

**RE: Local Strategic Partnerships:  
Shaping their future - a consultation paper**

Set out below are the comments of the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership on the consultation paper 'Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future.'

1. The role of LSPs and Sustainable Community Strategies

Epping Forest LSP is proud of the progress that it has made, and also proud of the fact that in a non NRF two tier structure, as a district level LSP it has developed the strategy which is jointly owned and was widely consulted upon. It has in place a good performance monitoring system, which is in advance of a number of other LSPs in Essex including the County LSP. LSP development in our county has largely followed the "separatist model" outlined in paragraph 67 of your document. Against this background we have no fundamental difficulty with any of the proposals set out in the section on the role of local strategic partnerships and sustainable community strategies.

In response to specific questions you raise we believe every local authority area should have its own LSP. Secondly we believe the establishment of greater delineation between County and District LSPs is very sensible and we would prefer the model that combines the aggregation model (where District level community strategies are aggregated to form an overarching strategy at County level), combined with an added value model for those areas of responsibility for which the County has authority. This would seem to us to create the best method of joint working between the tiers, and to prevent duplication that we believe blights the existing two tier arrangements.

We would point out that joint working is inevitably time consuming and we will come to a question of resources later. We believe that greater clarity over the

roles of different tiers of LSP would be very helpful and save significant duplication.

We agree with the suggestion that it is more appropriate in two tier areas for the responsibility for neighbourhood engagement to rest with the District level LSP. We also believe that this is the best way of engaging and ensuring the neighbourhood/parish voice and we believe our LSP has gone some way towards achieving this.

2. Governance

We believe that LAA arrangements are important. However, at the same time, they miss out on significant sections of important areas of partnership working for local communities and we would therefore argue that local partnership internal structural arrangements are best left to those partnerships.

The important issue is delivery and if the LAA is monitored closely by the ODPM it is highly likely that partnership structures will develop in a relatively similar way without the need for an overt structure set out in either guidance or legislation.

On the question of ensuring wide representation we believe that in two tier areas the more responsibility rests with District level local strategic partnerships, the more likely wide representation across the whole two-tier area is likely to happen and be effectively undertaken.

We believe that a duty of cooperation should be placed on PCTs, Learning and Skills Councils, colleges, the Education Authority, the Police, Parishes and Town Councils, NHS Trusts, and Foundation Trusts and in two tier areas County Councils with District LSPs and District Councils with County LSPs. We believe that duty should include responsibility for appropriate funding of the local strategic partnership.

3. Accountability

We believe that provided the nature of partnerships is clear (i.e. they are not simply a means by which local authorities try to more directly control all services in their area) then it is desirable that executive Councillors be included within LSPs if they are to be fully effective.

At the same time back benchers have an important role in bringing along neighbourhoods and communities which they represent and in influencing the LSP on behalf of those neighbourhoods and communities and each LSP needs to find a way of enabling this to happen.

We believe that LSPs across the county have tried many different ways of improving accountabilities of local businesses. There is no one solution and just as with communication LSPs need to keep trying different methods as often as possible of engaging with the communities they service.

The LSP supports the Government's intention to reduce national targets and allow LSPs greater scope for innovation and collaboration, as reflected in the LAA approach.

4. Capacity Issues

LSPs need to develop a more executive function in order to deal with the increase in bureaucracy that they face, and to ensure that they are effective in terms of delivery. To this end LSPs need to increase their managerial functions and focus.

We were dismayed by paragraph 137 that suggests that no additional resource would be available to LSPs to develop their ability to monitor and deliver services. Epping Forest LSP is currently funded through the contribution of some, but not all, of its partners. We believe LSPs in non NRF areas are in a tough position financially because it is difficult for hard pressed agencies to identify funding for an organisation which does not have a legal requirement to deliver, or have capacity so to do outside of the individual capacity of each partner. We believe there needs to be significant investment in infrastructure for non NRF LSPs to make a step change in their infrastructure and organisation in order to improve performance to the level identified in the consultation proposals.

Whilst we accept that it may be an interest to partners to provide more funding for a local strategic partnership operating at the level proposed, we believe that there needs to be at least pump priming funding to local agencies in the first instance.

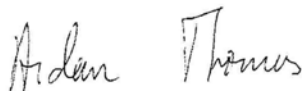
5. Conclusion

Overall Epping Forest LSP is proud of the level of achievement for the benefit of its community we have attained locally, and sees the potential for further joint development of strategy and delivery in our district.

Overall we are therefore supportive of the proposals in the consultation but at the same time concerned at the implications for the relationship between district and County partnerships, and in particular the issues around the funding of partnerships in the light of what they may in future be expected to deliver.

I hope these comments are of use to the consultation, please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information.

Yours faithfully



AIDAN THOMAS  
Chair  
Epping Forest LSP

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