

Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda



Local Strategic Partnership Task and Finish Panel Wednesday, 27th September, 2006

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Simon Hill - Research and Democratic Services
Tel: 01992 564249 email: shill@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

MEMBERS ARE REMINDED TO BRING TO THE MEETING THEIR COPY OF THE
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – LSP'S: SHAPING THEIR FUTURE

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)

Recommendation:

To determine a timescale and reporting deadline for each objective.

The Terms of Reference of the Panel is attached having been agreed at the first meeting. The Panel will be aware that the document contains a wide range of issues and aims which will need to be considered in a structured way to ensure they can be achieved. To ensure this the Panel is requested to order each issue and ascribe a meeting and reporting date to them. In doing this the Panel may wish to group similar items together to facilitate their consideration and make the best use of time.

The Panel should also decide on whether issues are to be reported separately or in a final report and the dates for this.

The Panel should also have regard to the budget making process for 2006/07 which is currently taking place and be aware of the need to submit any bids for this ideally by mid November 2006.

6. DISCUSSION WITH CHAIRMEN OF ACTION GROUPS AND REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PAPER

Chairmen of LSP Action Groups to report.

Members have previously agreed that the Chairmen of the various LSP Action Groups should be asked to attend this meeting to explain the role of the Action Groups , their relationship with the main Board and Steering Group and identify how District Members might be able to assist and become more involved with the process. Accordingly, the Chairmen of some of the groups will be in attendance to report.

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 WEDNESDAY, 30 AUGUST 2006
IN CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 9.15 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 and J Demetriou

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

Also in attendance: D Butler (Epping Forest College)

7. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

None reported.

8. 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.

9. NOTES OF 24 JULY 2006 MEETING

In relation to the LSP network meeting to be held in November 2006 in Newmarket, it was clarified that this was likely to include a presentation on the consultation document on the future role of LSPs. Provisional notification had only been received at this stage. Further details would be reported to Members when made available.

10. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME

Noted.

11. DISCUSSION WITH EPPING FOREST LSP AND REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PAPER

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting David Butler, the Chairman of the Epping Forest LSP.

The Panel received apologies for absence from Aidan Thomas, the former Chairman of the local partnership and Marina Sherriff, the Community Strategy and Partnership Manager.

A letter from Mr Thomas in view of his unavailability addressed to the Panel highlighting the achievements of the LSP and expectations for the future was circulated for consideration.

During the discussion that followed, it was reported that:

(a) the Partnership was borne out of the LGA 2000 and groupings of Local Community Agencies. Both the Joint Chief Executive (Community) and David Butler had been involved in this process at this early stage during their long involvement in partnership working. The LSP was made up of action groups including the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership which cascaded downwards under the LSP Board.

(b) the Partnership had always been aware of its non statutory status and always worked to this. The Partnership did not have the ability to take powers away from the constituent agencies who had responsibility for service provision. The Partnership had business involvement and was looking to attract more contributions from such sources in the future.

(c) Harlow which was an Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Area had been requested to set up a Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and received a significant amount of government funding in support of the initiative and had a performance framework. The District LSP had one paid employer – Marina Sherriff, who was funding through contributions through Voluntary Action Epping Forest. The constituent agencies all made regular contributions which paid for events and strategies. David Butler and the Epping Forest College in his capacity as Principal of the college carried out a large amount of research on behalf of the organisation.

The Panel thought that the Pack on the District LSP circulated was helpful.

(d) Mr Butler referred to his work with the Life Long Learner Action Group. This group predated the LSP and was drawn from providers and stakeholders of education and training. The District Partnership focused on training/retraining adults for employment.

(e) the Membership of the Partnerships working groups differed depending on their agenda. Participating groups volunteered their time.

(f) services for adult learners in the District was an issue of great concern. Given this, concern was expressed that the Workers Education Action Group and the 'U3A' had no representatives on the partnership. Mr Butler confirmed that these groups had been invited to join and undertook to send a further invitation to the groups.

(g) steps were being taken to better coordinate the work of Childrens Young Peoples Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) and the Life Long Learning Action Group to see how the CYPSP could be incorporated into the LSP agenda. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee was to consider a presentation from the CYPSP which would offer an opportunity to see how this could be pursued.

(h) having identified the need for a vocational Training Centre in Waltham Abbey, steps had been taken to successfully establish a centre in the area. This project could not have been achieved without partnership working and the support of the LSP which pulled together the various groups involved. Funding might be made available from Investors in Training for the project. The bid would be made during this academic year. Edexcel would create the application for no fee.

(i) reference was made to an article in the Local Government Chronicle issued on 22 June 2006 reporting the aims underpinning the new consultation document. The principles sought to increase the democratic accountability of LSPs by passing responsibility for LSPs to Local Authority Executives. It indicated that Council Leaders should chair LSPs Boards and Scrutiny should take on the role of scrutinising the Partnership. It also suggested that ward Members should be involved in the proposed Neighbourhood Panels and Town and Parish Councils play a role in clerking forums.

(j) LSPs could only invite representatives to participate. Those who contributed did so as they appreciated the value they could add to the process and recognised the benefits of getting together to reach an overarching view. It was important to ensure that in the event that the Council took a lead the constituent agencies continued to participate. This was likely as agencies recognised the benefits of partnership working and the value the Council added to the Partnership.

(k) a Member asked how groups were made aware of the partnership and the mechanism for getting people involved? It was stated that the LSP meetings were not well publicised despite being open to the public. It would be beneficial if notices were displayed to raise awareness. It was noted that that the Partnership was collectively responsible for promoting the body and its website had just started up and was linked to the EFDC website.

(l) concern was expressed over the possibility that the public might believe that private businesses were receiving privileged information as a result of their involvement in the partnership. Mr Butler clarified that such information was not discussed and they did not benefit in this way.

(m) Local Councils sat on the LSP Board. The expectation was that they would report to the Essex Association of Local Council's to ask to be represented on a working group. It would not be practically possible for all Local Councils to be represented due to the numbers involved.

(n) the Panel asked how much of the Partnerships work was determined by the Strategies? Mr Butler advised that his Life Long Learner Group focused on targeting hard to reach groups in education. Now that the Local Area Agreements were the main driving force each group had taken steps to look at their own agenda to make sure it supported the agreement. The Life Long Learner Group found that theirs did not and had taken steps to address this. The Group had spoken to the CYPSP Commissioner which should ensure that their work focused more on schools and the Group concentrated on helping adults into education.

(o) The Green and Unique Action Group had made a key contribution to the Housing needs and green debate underpinning the East of England Plan.

(p) In relation to the County LSP, there was some discussion about whether the County should have its own partnership. The County's strategy was made up of District Strategies and had never produced its own strategy. It was now being refocused and linked in with the work of the District LSPs through the Action Group Chairs. Aidan Thomas was involved in this process and had been influential.

(q) reference was made to the new Local Development Framework which the Council was currently developing and needed to be closely linked with the new Sustainable Community Strategy. It was expected that the Council would take the

lead role in formulating the framework and should consult on its own idea rather than seek ideas from the Community.

(r) Complaints were dealt with by the relevant constituent agency. Performance targets existed. At present the Partnership had signed up to the mandatory targets. Targets were controlled by the LSP and its constituent groups who offered their own targets which the partnership usually accepted and monitored. There was scope for scrutiny involvement in this which could be looked at.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted that the next meeting had been arranged for 27 September 2006 at 7.30 in CR1.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Partnership Groups would be invited to this next meeting.

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.

TIMESCALE	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
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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