

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF A MEETING OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TASK AND FINISH**  
**PANEL**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2006**  
**IN CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING**  
**AT 7.30 - 9.30 PM**

**Members Present:** Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), , Mrs J Lea and Mrs J H Whitehouse

**Other members present:**

**Apologies for Absence:** Mrs S Clapp, Mrs A Cooper, A Lee and J M Whitehouse

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

**Also in attendance:** R Puleston (Essex County Council)

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**19. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

None reported.

**20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor Mrs M Sartin declared a general 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.

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor Mrs J H Whitehouse declared a general personal interest by virtue of being a member of the Epping Forest Learning Partnership. She declared that her interest was not prejudicial and that she would remain in the meeting.

**21. NOTES OF LAST MEETING - 27 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Noted.

**22. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME**

Noted.

**23. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT - PRESENTATION FROM MR RICHARD PULESTON, HEAD OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND REGENERATION, ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL.**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting, Mr Richard Puleston, Head of Community Planning and Regeneration, Essex County Council who was present to report on the current situation regarding the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Essex.

The Panel had before them a report detailing the 5 LAA priorities that EFDC had agreed to focus on. They also had a copy of the LAA agreements itself, a copy of a LAA organisation chart produced for the LSP and a letter received from the County Council Chief Executive.

In his presentation (entitled 'A LAA for Essex – the six month review and 'refresh of Year 1) Mr Puleston explained that the LAA was a means to join up funding streams at a local level by bringing a number of local public sector partners around shared targets and objectives. The LAA was a mixture of national and local performance targets. The Essex LAA was signed in March 2006.

He advised that the agreement comprised 14 priorities and 68 targets covering key outcomes and stretched outcomes for which on attainment a reward would be made available. He reported that the value of this grant for the County totalled £38 million. He advised that a discussion was needed to determine how this funding was to be distributed.

### **Structure**

He advised that the agreement was centred on four blocks covering Children and Young People, Safer and Stronger Communities, Healthier Communities and Older People and Economic Development. In terms of the steering arrangements, the agreement was led by the Essex Partnership Steering Group. Underneath this sat the Executive Group which was a strategic group and included District Chief Executives (one per area), Strategic Health Authorities, Primary Care Authorities, the voluntary sector, police, fire and the leads of the four blocks, where in his opinion most of the 'real work' was carried out. There was a District Council representative on each of the four blocks. The twelve Essex LSP 'owned' the agreement and were closely linked to this structure. Existing county wide structures were used to deliver the block targets to avoid any overlap in work.

Mr Puleston advised that the County was currently looking at the structure of the Essex Partnership to see whether it was still 'fit for purpose'. It was recognised that the body needed to comprise a membership which represented the wide range of local partners and involved all partnerships in the delivery of the LAA, the Community Strategy and two-tier Authority working. Work was being undertaken on these issues by some of the local Chief Executives. There was no specific deadline for this re-organisation. The process would however need to address the need to develop a sustainable community strategy which it was envisaged should be a 'bottom up document'.

### **Performance Management**

Mr Puleston outlined the LAA Performance management Framework for action planning, co-ordinating resources and monitoring and reporting progress. The framework was made up of three levels. The first comprised target lead/contributors, the second was the block partnerships, the individual partners and the LSP. Mr Puleston felt that the most important work was carried out by this middle part of the structure which focused on how the LAA priorities were supported and delivered. These all reported through to the Executive who provided overview.

Mr Puleston reported that the agreements had only been in place for six months and the 'first 'cut' of information on performance had only just been received. The deadline for the submission of performance information for the first six month period of the agreement was 10 November 2006. Central government wished to see this

information into order to identify how the LAA was contributing and adding value to partnership working across the County. This data would be distributed to the District LSP as soon as it was received and to the Council. Some information was still outstanding. The task of getting information for certain areas was causing some difficulty therefore they would be concentrated on. These covered the target on waste management, economic development which would require a change of approach and baseline data for health.

Certain targets had been categorised as 'must do's for the District and were on areas which the District must play a major role in supporting their delivery. Others were can do's and on areas which the district could influence. These were listed.

The District Council was the driving force behind the delivery of targets.

Attention was drawn to a system called the 'dashboard' for reporting on LAA priorities to central government. There would also be an opportunity to refresh the agreement over the next two months. The government was adding new items and funding streams to the agreement which would require consideration as part of the review.

### **Funding**

There were two areas of funding – pooled and aligned funding. Pooled funded totalled £12million and was kept in a central pot under the control of the Essex Partnership Executive Group for distribution. This funding was usually 'passported' out to the Districts. The funding was not ring fenced therefore could be pooled and spent on any project. It was suggested that there needed to be some discussion over how this funding was distributed and how it could be used effectively. Aligned funding totalled £880 million. This was administered by the service provider and was to be channelled into the LAA priority areas. Both funding streams were for a three year period. The arrangements for this budget were relatively flexible. Some of the agencies that had offered money for this budget had subsequently withdrawn their offer. There was therefore some issues around how such bodies could be held to account and the leverage the partnership had over them.

Mr Puleston reported that the LAA was not a County document but a partnership document which could only be delivered by partnership working. A key aim of this presentation from his point of view was to identify whether the District had all the information it needed to support the LAA.

### **Research**

It was reported that surveys had been undertaken to gather information on the targets around residents perceptions. The questionnaires, undertaken by the BNG polling group comprised a postal survey and had been considered by the Safer and Stronger Communities block which represented a wide range of interests to ascertain views on the questions that they could address. Of the 10,000 questionnaires issued 4,500 had been returned. It was intended that the full data set for this would be sent to the Council. The County was also rolling out a system for capturing LAA performance data which would be kept up to date and made available to Districts. The process for determining priorities gave due influence to Districts.

### **Member Involvement**

The Panel requested that the relationship between the LAA, the LSP and the County be identified and requested information for this. It was questioned whether Members

had been asked whether they wished to become more involved in the LSP. Support was expressed for greater Member and District involvement in the LSP. It was made clear that Members were welcome to join an Action Group.

A Member drew attention to page 63 of the pack circulated to the Panel Members on the LAA. The Joint Chief Executive (Community) agreed to send Councillor Mrs Whitehouse the updated version of this document dated March 2006. Although Thurrock and South-end were not part of the Essex LAA, they had been involved in some of the work regarding economic issues as it was recognised that this was an area of County wide importance. The County was trying to arrange meetings with the authorities to take this forward.

Rachael Stoppard of the County Council was to attend the LSP Steering Board meeting in November 2006. LAA information was on the County Council website.

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That Mr Richard Puleston, Head of Community Planning and Regeneration, Essex County Council be thanked for his presentation on the Local Area Agreement for Essex.

(2) That the presentation be published on the Council Website.

**24. TRAINING SESSIONS - FEEDBACK**

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Smith had recently attended an LSP training session run by the East of England Assembly. In view of her unavailability, it was agreed that this item be deferred for consideration at a time when she was available to report her views to the Panel.

**25. LSP CONFERENCE REPORTS**

The Panel considered the notes of the following conferences:

(a) New Local Government Network LSP Conference 2006 – Shaping the future of Local Services (14 June 2006)

(b) Local Government Association Conference – Local Strategic Partnerships – Ready to Govern? (14 July 2006)

Marina Sheriff (Community Strategy and Partnership Manager) and Chris Overend (EFDC Policy and Research Officer) who attended the meetings reported feedback and ask Members to comment on the layout and the recommendations of the report. It was noted that a full report on the issues had been circulated earlier in the year.

In relation to paragraph 5.3, (Youth councils and interfaith forums) it was suggested that the LSP would work with the EFDC Youth Officer when appointed and the Children's and Young Persons Partnership with which a lot of work had been carried out.

In relation to recommendation 6.3 Marina reported that discussion was now taking place with Jacky Fuller to see how the LSP VCS representative could be more involved in the LSP and make recommendations.

It was reported recommendation 6.4 (that the LSP should continue to develop its relationship with GO- EAST, the regional LSP network, Essex County Council and the Essex Partnership) was already being implemented.

It was suggested that the Panel could take a proactive approach to the review and make comments on the future of the LSP before the consultation paper was published. The Panel questioned the implications of EFDC taking on the leadership of the Partnership and how this would differ from chairing it. At the moment Epping Forest College chaired the LSP. The former would involve taking a direct lead over the LSP. At present most partners would suggest that EFDC lead from the back and its role was to encourage and support the body. The Panel felt that these present arrangements worked well and that it should be maintained. The Panel were keen to ensure that the 'feeling of equality' between the partners was not disrupted. Representatives attended meetings at the moment as they appreciated the work of the LSP and the value they could add to the process. The suggestion in the emerging guidance that agencies would be under 'a duty to co-operate' would need to be given consideration.

The Panel thought that the noteds were very useful and supported the format. It was noted that the LSP had also considered these issues and also supported the format and content.

## **26. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Panel considered its terms of reference to consider which items still needed to be addressed and noted that these would be given consideration at the next meeting of the Panel.

The Chairman undertook to report on the work of the Panel to the next LSP Steering Board meeting to keep them up to date.

It was agreed that the next meeting would aim to draft a report and would be held on **15 November 2006 at 2.00 pm**. It was also agreed that a further meeting be arranged for 11 December 2006 at 7.30 pm.

### **ACTION:**

Democratic Services to circulate arrangements for future meetings as indicated to the all Panel Members and put item in bulletin.