

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TASK AND FINISH
PANEL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2006
IN CONFERENCE ROOM, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 2.00 - 4.10 PM

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

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: Mrs S Clapp, Mrs J Lea 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:

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor Mrs M Sartin , Mrs J H Whitehouse and Mrs A Cooper declared a general personal interest by virtue of being members of the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership. They declared that their interests were not prejudicial and that they would remain in the meeting.

28. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 25 OCTOBER 2006.

Noted.

29. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

Noted that there were no substitute members.

30. CONCLUSIONS AND REPORT

The Joint Chief Executive (Community) drew attention to the government consultation document ' LSPs – Shaping their future'.

He referred to the intention to pass responsibility for the LSP as a whole to the Local Authority Executive and the indication that the Council itself should become the lead agency for its activity and accountable for its work.

The Panel had before them copies of the notes for all their previous meetings and their terms of reference.

The Panel were asked to consider and begin to draft their final report and agreed the following:

(a) EFDC/ Member involvement.

Agreed that the Council should not take the lead in appointing the Chairman of the EF LSP. **Agreed** that the post should continue to be open to any constituent partners based on merit as per the existing arrangements.

Noted the value Members could add to the LSP as the democratically elected representatives. **Agreed** that back bench Member involvement in the Action Groups be encouraged and promoted by way of promotional items in suitable outlets and the Members Bulletin.

Agreed that the Council should continue to be represented on the LSP Steering Board by two Portfolio Holders. The Panel felt that this level of representation was proportionate and ensured a fair balance between the agencies. The Panel considered whether the Leader of the Council should become a member of the steering group.

Agreed that the issue of the LSP should be ascribed to a specific Portfolio to present reports on the Partnership and provide clear accountability. **Agreed** that the subject matter would best fit in with the Community Wellbeing Portfolio. **Agreed** that this Portfolio Holder should be involved in the monitoring arrangements for the Partnership and therefore should not be one of the Portfolio Holder representatives on the Steering Board.

Agreed that a procedure be established to formally recognise the Councils Member representatives on the LSP and Action Groups. **Agreed** that steps be taken to enable them to report back to full Council on activities to keep Members up to date on current work activities.

Noted a report from Councillor Mrs P Smith on her experience at a recent GO –East Seminar on LSPs. The seminar was attended by six other representatives from agencies in the region and highlighted the good practices of the District LSP.

(b) Scrutiny involvement

Agreed that the role of scrutiny needed to be increased and that it should become a key forum for monitoring and holding to account the arrangements. **Agreed** that the Chairman of the Partnership should be asked to attend an Overview and Scrutiny meeting once a year. **Agreed** that the Council's Member representatives should also be subject to Member scrutiny.

(c) LAA/County LSP

Agreed that the LSP should be actively involved in the decision making process for the LAA funding streams and should liaise with the County LSP to promote and secure local needs and facilitate two tier working.

Noted the opportunities in the white paper concerning two tier working with the County. **Noted** the need to work with Local Authorities elsewhere to influence regional planning policy.

Reference made to a presentation from County on the current position on the LAA and the current 'refresh' of the priorities. **Noted** current thinking aimed at changing the way the rewards grants for the achievement of LAA targets were allocated and

stressed the need for Council involvement in this process. **Noted** that the LAA performance targets were submitted to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel for scrutiny

(d) Funding

Noted that the Partnership was supported by a CSB sum of £10,000 and by voluntary donations from the constituent agencies. **Noted** that recent developments might result in changes to the level of contribution made by this external source and loss of financial support. The operational budget for the partnership was £45,000 per annum.

Noted that the budget funded the post of Community Strategy and Partnership Manager who provided the main source of administrative support for the LSP. This was allocated on a year by year basis due to the uncertainties around the financial support available to the partnership. **Agreed** that the level of administrative support provided for the work was insufficient.

Agreed that longer term funding should be sought for the partnership and overall the levels of resources allocated to it raised. **Noted** the need to secure more contributions for its work.

(e) Publicity and Participation

Noted that LSP meetings were open to the public. **Agreed** that residents should be involved but this was one task that required more consideration.

(f) Sustainable Community Strategy/ Local Planning Development Framework

Noted the need to produce a sustainable community strategy closely linked to the local planning development framework. **Agreed** to invite an appropriate officer from Planning Services to advise on the issues from a planning viewpoint.

(g) Timescale

Agreed the need to put the final report to the LSP for comments

Noted that the final report of the Panel would be submitted to the LSP itself for consideration prior to submission to the OSC in February 2006.

Agreed that the next meeting of the Panel planned for 11 December 2006 be moved back to the new year, to allow more time to draft the report and circulated it for consideration. **Agreed** that a new date would be fixed in due course and listed in the Members Bulletin.

31. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted that the next meeting would be held on 15 December 2006 at 7.30.