

Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda



Local Strategic Partnership Task and Finish Panel Wednesday, 15th November, 2006

Place: Conference Room, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 2.00 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

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- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
 - 2. 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.

- 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 3 - 8)**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Panel (attached).

4. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

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

5. CONCLUSIONS AND REPORT (Pages 9 - 34)

(Lead officer – J Scott/Chairman of Panel) Having heard from some of the Chairmen of the various LSP Action Groups and representatives of the Partners involved, it is now timely to review the evidence gathered to date, identify which elements of the terms of reference (attached) are still outstanding to take them forward and give consideration to the task of drawing conclusions and making a final report.

Members are reminded of the agreed process as detailed within the guidance notes (attached).

Members should also give consideration to who should be asked to prepare elements (or the entire) report.

For members information we have included within the pack all the previous notes of meetings.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

11 December 2006 - 7.30 pm CR1.

**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)

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 issue 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 notes 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.

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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	

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TASK AND FINISH
PANEL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 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 and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Other members present:

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

Officers Present J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), A Hall (Head of Housing Services), J Preston (Head of Planning and Economic Development), C Overend (Policy & Research Officer) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in attendance: Marina Sherriff (Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership), Francis Haste (Fit for Life) and Matt Roberts (Green and Unique)

13. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

None reported.

14. 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.

15. NOTES OF 24 JULY 2006 MEETING

Noted.

16. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME

The Joint Chief Executive (Community) anticipated that none of the items should require funding bids. In relation to item 10 it was envisaged that the recommendations of the Panel once drafted would be reported to the LSP Board for consideration and comments. It was envisaged that the review would aim for completion in May 2007 to take effect in the new Council year.

Agreed that a review of the Local Area Agreement be timetabled into the programme.

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

The Joint Chief Executive (Community) reminded the Panel that at its last meeting, members requested a discussion with the Chairmen of the various LSP Action Groups to explain their role, membership, relationship with the main Board and

Steering Group and identify how District Members might become more involved in the process.

Accordingly, he welcomed to the meeting, the District Council's Head of Housing Services (Chairman of the Homes and Neighbourhoods Action Group), the Head of Planning and Economic Development, (Chairman of the Economic Prosperity Group), Francis Haste of the District PCT, (Chairman of Fit for Life), and Matt Roberts of the Corporation of London (Chairman of Green and Unique). He also welcomed Marina Sheriff the Community Strategy and Partnership Manager.

(a) Overview

Marina Sherriff reported some background to her role, the duties performed and current projects.

(i) she advised that she had held the role for over three years and was the first appointee to the position. Her contract lay with Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) therefore some of her duties was around working with this agency including attending team meetings, line management and staff working groups. She was supported by and worked closely with the LSP, Partnership Action Groups, the Children and Young Peoples Services Partnership (CYPSP) and the Crime and Reduction Partnership (CDRP);

(ii) she had supported special events held by the Epping Forest College and was involved in an event at Oakwood Hill, Loughton to be held this week. With the Green and Unique Action Group, she had assisted with the organisation of the Buckhurst Hill Fair and would be working on another seminar with the Action Group. She had also supported special one off projects such as a recent youth community conference and the six month health challenge supported by Sports Management Ltd.;

(iii) she sat on the LSP Steering Board, the Local Area Agreement Groups, provided updates on the East of England Plan, attended meetings of the LSP Chairmen and had been involved in arranging the Partnerships annual conference. She referred to the LSP away day and what it involved. Her role was also to provide external links for the LSP;

(vi) she worked to coordinate the current LSP Action Plan and ensure that the targets secured effective outcomes and were 'smart'. A review would be carried out to prioritise the aims to ensure they added real value to LSP work. She explained that the Community Strategy comprised two parts. One was a set of long term visions. The other was a 'living action plan'. There might be a need to make changes in response to the need for sustainability. There was an LSP website and steps would be taken to publicize events

The Head of Planning and Economic Development highlighted some of Marina's key achievements specifically in relation to promoting and raising awareness of the District LSP at a regional level.

It was recognised that Marinas post was funded by the partnership through contributions. It was suggested that consideration should be given to providing more support for the partnership from both the Council and the other constituent agencies.

In response to questions, Ms Sherriff referred to the government consultation paper seeking to pass responsibility for LSPs to Local Councils. She stated that the partnership greatly benefited from the perception that it was independent and

envisaged that this would continue into the future. It was also acknowledged that the Health Services and PCT had been strongly involved in partnership working. Aidan Thomas the Chief Executive of the Epping Forest PCT supported joint working had worked to ensure that his directorate was locally focused and not diluted by the newly enlarged West Essex PCT.

(b) Homes and Neighbourhoods

The Head of Housing Services, the Chairman of the Homes and Neighbourhoods Action Group reported on the history and work of the group. He advised that as Chairman he sat on the LSP steering group. An important aim of the forum was to identify and seek to address any overlap on services. The group comprised twelve members including the Housing Association, the Tenants and Leaseholders Association and the Essex County Council. Last years meetings were attended by EFDC Portfolio Holders. He referred to the type of issues considered by the group. Discussions had explored the East of England Plan and the alterations to the Housing Chapter of the Local Plan. The group also monitored progress with the delivery of affordable housing and the housing aims of the LAA. The group discussed their action plan setting out the actions required to meet the relevant objectives in the Community Strategy which were listed. The Action Groups Housing Association Partners had agreed to jointly fund the groups website. At the forthcoming conference, the Homes and Neighbourhoods table would be looking to identify issues for consideration when exploring future housing numbers and locations.

The Chairman of the Group acknowledged that, as a great deal of joint working was carried out in housing services outside the LSP, its members might not benefit as much as some of the other participant groups from the collective approach afforded by the partnership. On the other hand, the group did allow partners to understand each other issues and the user point of view. Furthermore, the group had changed thinking on issues like the alterations to the Housing Chapters of the Local Plan.

The Group had liaised with the Housing Association existing Tenants and the Tenants and Leaseholder Federation to input into and support homelessness initiatives.

It was clarified that central government would only consider bids that had been commented upon and agreed by the LSP.

(c) Fit for Life

Francis Haste, the Chairman of the Fit for Life Action Group reported on her work. She advised that she had chaired the forum since January this year. Its membership comprised Voluntary Action Epping Forest, Leisure Services, Mental Health Charities, schools representatives and groups representing others aspects of mental health. The main focus of the group was around the development and provision of local services, improving preventative services, promoting healthier lifestyles and integration for a seamless service. The group had five LAA targets. The group were currently undertaking projects around healthy living and with the VAEF had considered a number of funding bids for projects. The group had applied for funding to support a parenting support initiative in Waltham Abbey.

The group liaised with other organisations to stop any duplication of work. The Head of Planning and Economic Development advised that he had met with Francis to support this aim. He advised that within the LAA there was an expectation that planning policy would incorporate policies for health improvement. The partnership

had raised the credibility of this. Moreover the LSP local network had provided groups with new contacts which should facilitate the achievement of this aim.

In response, Francis undertook to identify the services available for disabled adults. Consideration was being given to formalising the relationship between Children's and Young Peoples Partnership (CYPSP) and the LSP. It was possible that they could become the eight strand of the partnership.

(d) Green and Unique

Matt Roberts of Green and Unique reported his views. He advised that he had only recently taken on the Chairmanship of the group. He expressed support for the past achievements of his group and successful outcome achieved by others. He reported that he had relayed such positive information back to the Corporation of London and recommended that priority be given to his group. In his view the issue was not so much about what was done but how it was achieved. In terms of activities, he advised that the group worked with agencies such as the Lee Valley Park, the Environment Agency, DEFRA, Natural England. Approaches had been made to farmer and County landowner groups who were currently not represented to invite their involvement.

The group was involved in the North East Green Arc for London and held quarterly meetings. It was recommended that the Director of this latter project be invited to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give a presentation.

Matt reported that at the forthcoming LSP conference, the group he would be chairing would consider the problem of litter. He expressed a commitment to identifying the cause of problems and recognised that litter and the cleanness of streets affected the wellbeing of the community.

The Policy and Research Officer reported that the Panel might wish to consider whether Portfolio Holders should become more involved in the partnership and proposals for this.

(e) Economic Prosperity

The Head of Planning and Economic Development reported on the work of his group. He reported the membership of the group included Business Link for Essex, the Epping Forest Learning Partnership, the EFDC Town Centre Manager. There was a high turnover of attendees at meetings. The Partnership had enabled his planning services team to build up a regular network of contacts which they might not have been aware of otherwise. He reported the business conducted by the group meeting held on 16 May 2006.

In terms of the aims for enhancing Town Centres, it was reported that the Council's Town Centre manager, Shona Pollack was initially appointed to develop the Town Centres around the Loughton Sainsbury's store where she was based, Loughton High Road, Loughton Broadway and Buckhurst Hill. However, as her contract progressed, she had become involved with the other three town centres in the District and worked to the principle that her work must not adversely affect these centres. The contract however was coming to an end. Shona was involved in a range of community activities. It was clarified that she worked within Planning Services and amongst other things imputed into the process for updating the Council's planning policies.

A member suggested that the Town Centre Partnerships should involve a wider range of interests such as voluntary groups. The view was expressed that the communication arrangements between the Members on the partnership and other Members needed to be improved. The meeting noted recent activities to facilitate the provision of 2012 Olympic events and hospitality arrangement. It was suggested that emphasis should be placed on existing facilities rather than new ones and that there should be collaboration to identify the District's aspirations in this respect and that a more reactive approach should be taken.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairmen of the Action Groups be thanked for their presentations on the work of their groups.

18. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted that the next meeting had been arranged for 25 October 2006 at 7.30 in CR1.

It was noted that the next meeting of the LSP Board would be held on 28 October 2006 at 2.00pm at the Civic Offices, Epping.

It was noted that the next meeting would consider the Local Area Agreement

Marina Sheriff reported that she wished to attend all future meetings on the Panel and would be added to the agenda distribution list.

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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.

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.



SCRUTINY



Epping Forest District Council

TASK AND FINISH REPORT TEMPLATE

Contact for enquiries:
Lead Officer
Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices
Epping, CM16 4BZ
jgilbert@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
01992 56 4062

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- Make the contents table lines invisible
- Each section to start on its own page
- The addition of photographs always make a report more reader friendly and a document more professional looking.
- It may be argued that the introduction and context section could be put under one heading. Splitting up these headings helps to keep the report in small chunks, making it easily readable and more accessible.
- The same applies for keeping the recommendations separate from the main body of the report.
- If needed more section headings can be added.

1. Chairman's Foreward

Setting out briefly what the panel was tasked to look at, and how the panel went about it.

The Chairman can use this section to give any personal thanks to the people and organisations consulted.

This should take up about one side of A4.

2. Introduction or Overview

This section sets out the formal terms of reference for the panel, who they consulted and how they went about gathering the evidence (i.e. by interview, site visits, questions to organisations, questionnaires etc.). This will be a more detailed explanation that's in the Chairman's forward.

If pertinent it should set out why the Panel did not look at some aspect of the topic they were charged to look at.

3. Context

Background to the topic under review – how Government Policy fits in, any relevant legal considerations any laws (European or domestic).

How the Council's policies are affected (if at all) or how EFDCs geographical area fits in (local context) and any other local considerations that were taken into account.

4. Summary of Recommendations

The Panels recommendations should be listed out here. If there are enough recommendations it could be divided into sections, each relating to different section of the report.

Recommendations should begin: **"The Panel recommends that...."**

5. Report

This section will detail the evidence gathered and the conclusions reached. This should be related to the recommendations made in the summary of recommendations.

Start with a general introduction (if thought useful) and then repeat each recommendation adding an explanation as to why that recommendation was made, citing any evidence gathered and the conclusions drawn. In order to meet legal requirements, if the recommendations are to go on to Cabinet or Council for action, the report should indicated any options that were considered and rejected and reasons why.

6. Conclusion

Very short version of report for busy people – maybe with an eye for putting this bit out as a press release.

7. Acknowledgements

To give formal acknowledgement to any sources used e.g:

Organisations;

People;

Officers;

Experts;

Websites;

Laws;

Locations visited;

Council policies etc.

8. Appendices

If needed to add background information, tables, graphs etc.

TASK AND FINISH PANELS GUIDANCE NOTES

Introduction

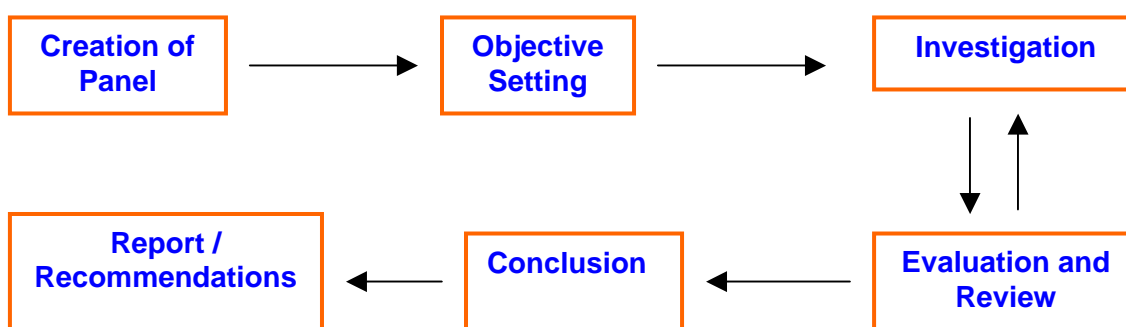
1. Task and Finish Scrutiny Panels are established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to deal with ad hoc projects or reviews included in the annual work programme for Overview and Scrutiny.
2. Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel status will be restricted to those activities which are issue-based, time limited and non-cyclical in character and have clearly defined objectives.
3. Task and Finish Panels as with all Overview and Scrutiny must be member led. The members should control the agenda and have ownership of the work programme.

Scoping Phase

4. **(Pre Scoping)** Before their first meeting with the Chairman, the Lead Officer should hold an informal meeting with any officers that may be connected to the topic to be reviewed to try and establish any and all issues related to the subject, so that that the Lead Officer on meeting with the Chairman, has some background information to submit.
5. **(Scoping)** At the start of a Task and Finish Panel the Lead Officer will draft the Terms of Reference in conjunction with the Chairman of the Panel. The Panel will then meet to discuss the Terms of References and decide how they are to achieve their goals. An emphasis must be put on clear and realistic objectives, which are timely and time limited.
6. Terms of Reference and objectives should, if at all possible, be defined using the **SMART** objective framework:

Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Time Limited

7. The life cycle of a Task and Finish Panel will look like this:



Investigation Phase

8. Before any conclusions can be drawn, evidence must first be gathered. All available sources must be tapped, making the most of the expertise within the Council, any outside organisations and public opinion if applicable.
9. The investigation phase can be handled as a full group review or as a 'delegated tasks' approach, with individual members or small sub groups, gathering evidence to bring back to the full Panel.
10. Any reports by officers to a Task and Finish panel should provide relevant evidence and background but should not make any recommendations. They should be done in an informal style, and not mirror the house Cabinet, Portfolio Holder style of reports.
11. If thought necessary outside bodies should be involved in the evidence gathering phase, either by inviting that organisation to give a one off presentation or by co-opting an outside member onto the Panel for the duration of the Panel's life in a non-voting capacity.
12. Creativity and imagination should be used in gathering evidence. Ways can and should be found of getting the views of groups who may be overlooked. Perhaps the review should be publicised and contributions invited, the use of community venues encouraged and feedback provided to participants.

Witnesses and Questioning

13. When questioning witnesses, questions should be kept brief, clear and to the point. Start with broad questions first and then narrow down the focus. Remember to use 'follow ups' to obtain a clearer explanation. The use of pre-meetings could be used to organise the Panels approach to the questioning of 'witnesses' and to get the most out of the session.
14. Remember the panel is not there to trip people up, "grill" them, apportion blame or to make their life difficult. Rather it is to understand the issues affecting the topic under review and how it affects the District Council and its residents.

Gathering Evidence

15. Methods of evidence gathering should be as systematic and objective as possible, not just anecdotal. Use a variety of approaches and not just rely on a single source. Some different ways that evidence could be gathered are:

- Statistical Surveys;
- Focus Groups and Workshops;
- Public Meetings;
- Self-advocacy groups;
- Street surveys;
- Site visits;
- Mystery Shopping.

Panel members should carry out these tasks, design the survey forms or prepare the questionnaires themselves. Officers are to be used in an advisory capacity only.

Report and Follow-up

16. The concluding report will need to be clear, concise, evidence based with illustrative anecdotes. All the evidence gathered should be listed and if thought appropriate summarised. There will need to be clear, realistic and specific recommendations formulated so that progress can be measured and followed up. The report should (wherever practicable) ask for responses to its recommendations within a realistic time period. (A draft format of a Task and Finish report is attached.)

17. The report should, if thought appropriate, be promoted to the public, e.g. through a press release and/or publicised via our website.

18. A mini-review of outcomes be carried out after an appropriate period (not later than six months (if appropriate) after the end of the review). The results of this review should be reported back to the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The entire Panel should not be involved in this follow-up review. The Chairman on his/her own or a small sub-group of two or three members would be enough. They could provide the full panel with a short written report on their findings if necessary; otherwise a verbal report would suffice.

Democratic Services
July 2006

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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	Discussion with Richard Puleston	
15 November 2006		
11 December 2006		

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