

EPPING FOREST LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

Date: 17 June 2010

Time: 2.00 - 4.00 pm

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Mrs D Collins (DC)	Epping Forest District Council (Chairman)
D Anstey (DA)	Lee Valley regional Park Authority
J Chandler (JC)	Chair Epping Forest Children's Partnership, EFDC
Cllr Mrs A Grigg (AG)	Chair of Sustainable Communities Theme Group, EFDC
P Hall (PH)	Chair Healthier Communities Theme Group, West Essex PCT
D Macnab (DM)	Deputy Chief Executive, Epping Forest District Council
G Mangan (GM)	14-19 Area Planning Group
Cllr B Surtees (BS)	Representing Town and Parish Councils
C Thompson (CT)	Representing Town and Parish Councils
Y Wetton (YW)	Essex County Council
J Wright (JW)	Principal, Epping Forest College

Presenting Items:

John Houston (JH)	LSP Manager
Jim Nolan (JN)	Deputy Director Environment & Street Scene, EFDC

Supporting Officers:

Colin Rowell (CR)	LSP Administrator
David Wright (DW)	LSP Administrator

Apologies:

K Brown	Essex Federation of Small Businesses
G Ellis	Faith Groups
J Foile	Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Epping Forest
J Gilbert	Chair of Safer Communities Partnership, EFDC
A Haigh	Chair Multi Faith Forum
Cllr V Metcalfe	Essex County Council
C O'Connell	West Essex Primary Care Trust
P Thomson	Epping Forest Conservators, City of London
Sue Wainwright	Jobcentre Plus
S Williams	Essex Police

1. WELCOME/ NEW MEMBERS/APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed members particularly David Anstey to his first meeting and Jim Nolan who was deputising for John Gilbert. Nicola Reilly, on work experience with EFDC Democratic Services, was also welcomed. The apologies were read out. A message from Councillor Ann Haigh thanking the LSP for a £100 donation towards banners for the Multi-Faith Forum was read out by the Chairman.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (18/03/2010)/MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of the last meeting (18th March 2010) were **agreed** as a true record. JH reported on matters arising. He brought to members' attention, action reference BO-12/17-12, pointing out that the placement of links to the One Epping Forest website had been patchy and requesting that partners follow this up.

3. A REVIEW OF THE NEW CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S KEY PLANS

JH spoke on the 'The Coalition: Our Programme for Government.' paper contained in the meeting pack. He said that a review of the document was included in the agenda because of the role of the LSP being strategic, anticipating and planning for change, looking for efficiencies and lobbying on behalf of the area. Given the size of the document with over 350 themes only those key ones related to the LSP role were highlighted and these have been listed in appendix 1. It is a wide ranging programme with many of the proposals having a significant impact on this area. JH suggested a mini Task and Finish team be set up to look at opportunities for doing new things through the LSP or doing differently what we currently do. The key message, however, was that 'the deficit reduction programme takes precedence over any of the other measures in this agreement' and partners would need to work closely together to manage reductions effectively.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The final consultation on the Community Strategy is now underway, it contains 11 objectives. This is down from the original 50 in the previous Strategy, a reduction which was agreed at the LSP Board Away Day in February 2010. The final draft has been circulated to stakeholders, parish councils, LSP members and others, with feedback requested by 2 Aug 2010. The final strategy will be presented to Council and Cabinet in September 2010 for endorsement.

CT noted that the Strategy document was excellent and very easy to read.

DM thanked JH for his hard work on production of the document.

5. THEME GROUP REPORTS

5.1 Children's Partnership.

JC reported that the EFCP group was working well and participants are very engaged and proactive. Group members are now monitoring all PRG projects more closely. A proposal to redirect some PRG funding was agreed by the EFCP, however, this was rejected by County and negotiations are ongoing.

All projects are working well. EFCP is seeking clarification on available funding; this will be covered in agenda item 6.

JC agreed that EFCP would make best use of available funding.

DC noted that the current expectation is for projects that have been started to continue to receive funding while Performance Rewards Grant cuts of 50% were being examined for projects not yet underway.

5.2 Safer Communities Partnership.

JN tabled a paper with the latest crime statistics and highlights of recent activity from the SCP. 2009/10 overall crime statistics are down. The Safe & Sound

project is due for launch at the end of June 2010; it is designed to improve independence and safety of older people.

A 6 month cross border post has been created covering Epping and bordering London boroughs; it coordinates the crime prevention activities of these areas.

Crucial Crew is running for 2 weeks from 7 June 2010. Reality Roadshow (similar to Crucial Crew but for year 9's) will take place on 1 July 2010.

The Farmers' Neighbourhood Action Panel (FNAP) has been established to tackle crime in rural farming communities within the district. The scheme is working very well.

Domestic violence has been targeted due to the World Cup. Posters have been put up in men's toilets highlighting the problem.

BS asked how much liaison there is with schools outside the area in respect of activities such as Crucial Crew. JN replied that there is very little since most districts bordering Epping Forest run their own programmes. AG attended the Crucial Crew event and reported that it was excellent and thanked everyone involved. DC added her praise for Crucial Crew, the children react very well to the event scenarios.

5.3 Sustainable Communities

AG reported on the last meeting of the SC Theme Group.

The recently formed Transport Task and Finish group reported to the SC Theme Group. The terms of reference have been agreed and the Chairman was elected. The next meeting will focus on the services provided by local taxi firms.

EFDC has signed up to the Nottingham declaration on the environment.

A presentation was given by Sarah Creitzman entitled 'Meeting the Carbon Challenge' and covered the impact of climate change and what is expected of local authorities. EFDC is undertaking a number of initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint, including smart meters, installation of insulation and solar powered pay and display parking meters.

Development of the M11 Corridor Economic Partnership is underway.

5.4 Healthier Communities

PH gave an update on the progress of the Healthier Communities Theme Group. A very positive meeting was held 2 weeks ago. The HC Theme Group will be focusing on three main themes, intervention, influencing and information.

Gemma Jones gave feedback to the health group on the Ninefields project, feedback has been very good and a formal report is due at the next meeting. It is being proposed that this project is used as a template for similar projects in other areas. The Ninefields promotional leaflet was circulated. DC emphasized the very good work that this project was doing.

A Healthier Communities bulletin is being developed and will be circulated to people with an interest in health and wellbeing in the district.

JC described the Healthworks project to develop health and wellbeing among young people in Waltham Abbey. The project is being run by EFDC and the PCT and has received £80,000 of funding from the Harlow Health Centres Trust. The project is due for launch in Sep 2010 and will target hard to reach groups.

GM noted that the 14–19 LDG may have funding that could be used by the EFCP. This will be discussed with JC after this meeting. **Action 01 GM/JC**

6. LSP MANAGERS UPDATE

JH reviewed the previously circulated Steering Group minutes which included proposal website improvement and the next stakeholder conference. The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) now has 80 people employed by 25 employers across the district, the first of which will complete their 6 month placement this month. The second phase of the FJF will employ 95 young people for 6 months. The young people employed in the first phase of the FJF have been of a consistently high quality.

DC noted that the FJF has been very useful, with most young people on the scheme being highly qualified including graduates and they were making an excellent contribution to the organisations they were working with..

BS noted that it is very important that young people finishing their FJF term may well be unemployed and they will still need help and support. This was agreed.

It was noted that the FJF bid would not have been successful without the LSP and the West Essex Partnership (WEP).

The WEP, with support from County, has set up the primary prize scheme. Funding is provided by the LSP for 6 awards in 40 primary schools participating this year. These awards are given to those pupils that are deemed to have shown the most improvement. The prizewinners in the EF district will attend a prize giving at Epping Forest College on 14 July 2010

JH gave an update on a communication received from County relating to PRG funding. The communication stated that PRG funding from central government will now be reduced by 50% and that County had forward funded PRG projects. This leaves ECC with a potential funding gap. Currently however, £11m had been spent, including all the money for our local projects and the money used to pay for One Epping Forest running costs. The money the County had earmarked for other projects amounts to £26m and with anticipated income of £13m in total from PRG then a significant gap exists. The County partnership has asked the local partners look at modeling cuts of 50% and 75% in the PRG budget for all the money spent over the last 2 years. As our projects had already spent at least 42% of their money, this would be very difficult in Epping Forest but many of the county-wide projects were underspent. Officers are in discussion with ECC on how this process can be managed in a fair and transparent way. However, PRG projects not started locally have been put on hold. Partners have been asked to assess the impact of ceasing projects immediately but to continue with existing projects until further guidance is received.

DC gave an update from the recent County Chairs meeting. The Portfolio holder at County has said money already spent will not be clawed back from projects. It is unlikely however that any new projects will be funded. Discussions will take place with County to clarify and finalise the situation but there was a clear understanding that a 50% cut, if implemented, would result in many if not all projects ceasing.

DM commented that there was a lack of transparency in the PRG process and that any reduction in PRG funding should be spread evenly across district and County projects.

JH reported that Clive Snell had stood down from the LSP Board due to other work commitments. It was agreed that another business representative should be sought to replace him and that the Chairman will write to Clive Snell to thank him for his contribution to the LSP.

7. AOB / OPEN FORUM

There was no other business.

8. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

7 October	2 pm	Committee Room 1	Civic Offices, High St, Epping
16 December	TBA	Venue TBA	TBA

9. APPENDIX 1. KEY THEMES FROM 'THE COALITION: OUR PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT' AFFECTING LSPS**Business**

We will **cut red tape by introducing a 'one-in, one-out' rule** whereby no new regulation is brought in without other regulation being cut.

We will **review IR 35, as part of a wholesale review of all small business taxation**, and seek to replace it with simpler measures that prevent tax avoidance but do not place undue administrative burdens or uncertainty on the self-employed, or restrict labour market flexibility.

We will find a practical way to **make small business rate relief automatic**.

We will seek to **ensure a level playing field between small and large retailers by enabling councils to take competition issues into account when drawing up their local plans to shape the direction and type of new retail development**.

We will **make it easier for people to set up new enterprises by cutting the time it takes to start a new business**. Our ambition is to make the UK one of the fastest countries in the world to start up a new business. We will reduce the number of forms needed to register a new business, and move towards a 'one-click' registration model.

We will **end the ban on social tenants starting businesses in their own homes**.

We will **promote small business procurement**, in particular by introducing **an aspiration that 25% of government contracts should be awarded to small and medium-sized businesses** and by publishing government tenders in full online and free of charge.

We will reinstate an Operating and Financial Review to **ensure that directors' social and environmental duties have to be covered in company reporting**, and investigate further ways of improving corporate accountability and transparency.

We will **ensure that Post Offices are allowed to offer a wide range of services** in order to sustain the network, and we will look at the case for developing new sources of revenue, such as the creation of a Post Office Bank.

We will **support the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships** – joint local authority-business bodies brought forward by local authorities themselves to promote local economic development – to replace Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). These may take the form of the existing RDAs in areas where they are popular.

Civil Liberties

We will **extend the scope of the Freedom of Information Act** to provide greater transparency.

We will **further regulate CCTV**.

We will **establish a Commission to investigate the creation of a British Bill of Rights** that incorporates and builds on all our obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights, ensures that these rights continue to be enshrined in British law, and

protects and extends British liberties. We will seek to promote a better understanding of the true scope of these obligations and liberties.

Communities and Local Government

The Government believes that it is time for a **fundamental shift of power from Westminster to people. We will promote decentralisation and democratic engagement**, and we will end the era of top-down government by giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.

We will promote the radical **devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups**. This will include a review of local government finance.

We will rapidly **abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils**, including giving councils new powers to stop 'garden grabbing'.

In the longer term, we will **radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places** in which their inhabitants live, based on the principles set out in the Conservative Party publication *Open Source Planning*.

We will publish and **present to Parliament a simple and consolidated national planning framework** covering all forms of development and setting out national economic, environmental and social priorities.

We will maintain the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and other environmental protections, and create a new designation – similar to SSSIs – to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities.

We will abolish the Government Office for London and **consider the case for abolishing the remaining Government Offices**.

We will explore a range of measures to **bring empty homes into use**.

We will **promote shared ownership schemes** and help social tenants and others to own or part-own their home.

We will **promote 'Home on the Farm' schemes** that encourage farmers to convert existing buildings into affordable housing.

We will **create new trusts that will make it simpler for communities to provide homes for local people**.

We will **phase out the ring-fencing of grants to local government** and review the unfair Housing Revenue Account.

We will **freeze Council Tax in England for at least one year**, and seek to freeze it for a further year, in partnership with local authorities.

We will **give councils a general power of competence**.

We will **allow councils to return to the committee system**, should they wish to.

We will **introduce new powers to help communities save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services**.

We will **implement the Sustainable Communities Act**, so that citizens **know how taxpayers' money is spent** in their area and have a greater say over how it is spent.

We will cut local government inspection and abolish the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

We will **require continuous improvements to the energy efficiency of new housing**.

Crime and Policing

The Government believes that **we need radical action to reform our criminal justice system**. We need police forces that have greater freedom from Ministerial control and are better able to deal with the crime and anti-social behaviour that blights people's lives, but which are much more accountable to the public they serve.

We will introduce measures to make the police more accountable through oversight by a directly elected individual, who will be subject to strict checks and balances by locally elected representatives.

We will oblige the police to **publish detailed local crime data statistics every month**, so the public can get proper information about crime in their neighbourhoods and hold the police to account for their performance.

We will require police forces to **hold regular 'beat meetings'** so that residents can hold them to account.

We will make hospitals **share non-confidential information with the police** so they know where gun and knife crime is happening and can target stop-and-search in gun and knife crime hot spots.

We will **give people greater legal protection to prevent crime and apprehend criminals**.

We will **overhaul the Licensing Act to give local authorities and the police much stronger powers to remove licences** from, or refuse to grant licences to, any premises that are causing problems.

We will **allow councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar** found to be persistently **selling alcohol to children**.

Culture, Olympics Media and Sport

We will **use cash in dormant betting accounts to improve local sports facilities and support sports clubs**.

We will introduce measures to **ensure the rapid roll-out of superfast broadband across the country**. We will ensure that BT and other infrastructure providers allow the use of their assets to deliver such broadband, and we will seek to introduce superfast broadband in remote areas at the same time as in more populated areas. If necessary, we will consider using the part of the TV licence fee that is supporting the digital switchover to fund broadband in areas that the market alone will not reach.

Deficit Reduction

The Government believes that it is the most vulnerable who are most at risk from the debt crisis, and that it is **deeply unfair that the Government could have to spend more on debt interest payments than on schools**. So we need immediate action to tackle the deficit in a fair and responsible way, ensure that taxpayers' money is spent responsibly, and get the public finances back on track.

We will **significantly accelerate the reduction of the structural deficit over the course of a Parliament, with the main burden of deficit reduction borne by reduced spending rather than increased taxes**.

We will set out a **plan for deficit reduction in an emergency budget**. We have **created an independent Office for Budget Responsibility** to make new forecasts of growth and borrowing for this emergency budget.

We will make **modest cuts of £6 billion to non-front-line services** within the financial year 2010/11, subject to advice from the Treasury and the Bank of England on their feasibility and advisability. A proportion of these savings can be used to support jobs.

We will hold a **full Spending Review reporting this autumn**, following a fully consultative process involving all tiers of government and the private sector.

We will **reduce spending on the Child Trust Fund** and tax credits for higher earners.

We will **create strong financial discipline at all levels of government and place an obligation on public servants to manage taxpayers' money wisely.**

We will **reduce the number and cost of quangos.**

Energy and Climate change

Through our 'Green Deal', we will encourage home energy efficiency improvements paid for by savings from energy bills. We will also take measures to improve energy efficiency in businesses and public sector buildings. We will **reduce central government carbon emissions by 10% within 12 months.**

We will encourage community-owned renewable energy schemes where local people benefit from the power produced. We will also allow communities that host renewable energy projects to keep the additional business rates they generate.

As part of the **creation of a green investment bank**, we will create green financial products to provide individuals with opportunities to invest in the infrastructure needed to support the new green economy.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

We will **introduce measures to protect wildlife and promote green spaces and wildlife corridors in order to halt the loss of habitats and restore biodiversity.**

We will **review the governance arrangements of National Parks in order to increase local accountability.**

We will work towards full **compliance with European Air Quality standards.**

We will work towards a **'zero waste' economy**, encourage councils to pay people to recycle, and work to reduce littering.

We will promote **high standards of farm animal welfare.** We will end the testing of household products on animals and work to reduce the use of animals in scientific research.

We will investigate **measures to help with fuel costs in remote rural areas, starting with pilot schemes.**

We will **create a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system.**

Equalities

The Government believes that there are **many barriers to social mobility and equal opportunities** in Britain today, with too many children held back because of their social background, and too many people of all ages held back because of their gender, race, religion or sexuality.

We will **promote equal pay and take a range of measures to end discrimination in the workplace.**

We will **extend the right to request flexible working to all employees**, consulting with business on how best to do so.

We will **undertake a fair pay review in the public sector to implement our proposed '20 times' pay multiple.**

Families and Children

The Government believes that strong and stable families of all kinds are the bedrock of a strong and stable society.

We will **maintain the goal of ending child poverty in the UK by 2020.**

We **support the provision of free nursery care for pre-school children**, and we want that support to be provided by a diverse range of providers, with a greater gender balance in the early years workforce.

We will **take Sure Start back to its original purpose of early intervention**, increase its focus on the neediest families, and better involve organisations with a track record of supporting families. We will investigate ways of ensuring that providers are paid in part by the results they achieve.

We will **publish serious case reviews, with identifying details removed**.

We will **review the criminal records and vetting and barring regime** and scale it back to common sense levels.

Government Transparency

The Government believes that we need to **throw open the doors of public bodies, to enable the public to hold politicians and public bodies to account**. Setting government data free will bring significant economic benefits by enabling businesses and non-profit organisations to build innovative applications and websites.

We will require **public bodies to publish online the job titles of every member of staff and the salaries and expenses of senior officials paid more than the lowest salary permissible in Pay Band 1 of the Senior Civil Service pay scale**, and organograms that include all positions in those bodies.

We will introduce **new protections for whistleblowers in the public sector**.

We will take steps to **open up government procurement and reduce costs; and we will publish government ICT contracts online**.

International Development

We will **create new mechanisms to give British people a direct say in how an element of the aid budget is spent**.

Jobs and Welfare

The Government believes that we need to **encourage responsibility and fairness in the welfare system**. That means providing help for those who cannot work, training and targeted support for those looking for work, but sanctions for those who turn down reasonable offers of work or training.

We will **end all existing welfare to work programmes and create a single welfare to work programme** to help all unemployed people get back into work.

We will ensure that Jobseeker's Allowance claimants facing the most significant barriers to work are referred to the new welfare to work programme immediately, not after 12 months as is currently the case. We will ensure that **Jobseeker's Allowance claimants aged under 25 are referred to the programme after a maximum of six months**.

We will **support would-be entrepreneurs through a new programme – Work for Yourself – which will give the unemployed access to business mentors and start-up loans**.

We will draw on a range of **Service Academies to offer pre-employment training and work placements** for unemployed people.

We will **develop local Work Clubs** – places where unemployed people can gather to exchange skills, find opportunities, make contacts and provide mutual support.

Justice

We will **introduce effective measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, including forms of restorative justice such as Neighbourhood Justice Panels.**

NHS

We will **guarantee that health spending increases in real terms in each year** of the Parliament, while recognising the impact this decision will have on other departments.

We will **stop the top-down reorganisations of the NHS** that have got in the way of patient care. We are **committed to reducing duplication and the resources spent on administration, and diverting these resources back to front-line care.**

We will significantly **cut the number of health quangos.**

We will **cut the cost of NHS administration by a third** and transfer resources to support doctors and nurses on the front line.

We will **strengthen the power of GPs as patients' expert guides** through the health system by enabling them to commission care on their behalf.

We will **ensure that there is a stronger voice for patients locally through directly elected individuals on the boards of their local primary care trust (PCT). The remainder of the PCT's board will be appointed by the relevant local authority or authorities**, and the Chief Executive and principal officers will be appointed by the Secretary of State on the advice of the new independent NHS board. This will ensure the right balance between locally accountable individuals and technical expertise.

The **local PCT will act as a champion for patients and commission** those residual services that are best undertaken at a wider level, rather than directly by GPs. It will also take responsibility for improving public health for people in their area, working closely with the local authority and other local organisations.

If a **local authority** has concerns about a significant proposed closure of local services, for example an A&E department, it will have the **right to challenge health organisations**, and refer the case to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel. The Panel would then provide advice to the Secretary of State for Health.

We will **give every patient the right to choose to register with the GP they want**, without being restricted by where they live.

We will **help elderly people live at home for longer through solutions such as home adaptations and community support programmes.**

We will **put patients in charge of making decisions about their care, including control of their health records.**

Pensions and Older People

We will **phase out the default retirement age and hold a review to set the date** at which the state pension age starts to rise to 66, although it will not be sooner than 2016 for men and 2020 for women. We will end the rules requiring compulsory annuitisation at 75.

We will **protect key benefits for older people such as the winter fuel allowance**, free TV licences, free bus travel, and free eye tests and prescriptions.

Political Reform

The Government believes that our political system is broken. We urgently need fundamental political reform, including a referendum on electoral reform, much greater co-operation across party lines, and changes to our political system to make it far more transparent and accountable.

We will **establish five-year fixed-term Parliaments.**

We will bring forward a **Referendum Bill on electoral reform.**

We will **stop plans to impose supplementary business rates on firms if a majority of the firms affected do not give their consent.**

We will **give residents the power to veto excessive council tax increases.**

Public Health

We will **give local communities greater control over public health budgets with payment by the outcomes they achieve in improving the health of local residents.**

We will **give GPs greater incentives to tackle public health problems.**

We will **investigate ways of improving access to preventative healthcare for those in disadvantaged areas to help tackle health inequalities.**

Schools

The Government believes that we need to reform our school system to tackle educational inequality, which has widened in recent years, and to give greater powers to parents and pupils to choose a good school. We want to ensure high standards of discipline in the classroom, robust standards and the highest quality teaching. We also believe that the state should help parents, community groups and others come together to improve the education system by starting new schools.

We will **promote the reform of schools in order to ensure that new providers can enter the state school system in response to parental demand; that all schools have greater freedom over the curriculum; and that all schools are held properly to account.**

We will **fund a significant premium for disadvantaged pupils from outside the schools budget by reductions in spending elsewhere.**

We will **give parents, teachers, charities and local communities the chance to set up new schools**, as part of our plans to allow new providers to enter the state school system in response to parental demand.

We believe **the most vulnerable children deserve the very highest quality of care. We will improve diagnostic assessment for schoolchildren, prevent the unnecessary closure of special schools, and remove the bias towards inclusion.**

We will **improve the quality of vocational education, including increasing flexibility for 14–19 year olds** and creating new Technical Academies as part of our plans to diversify schools provision.

Social Action

The Government believes that the innovation and enthusiasm of civil society is essential in tackling the social, economic and political challenges that the UK faces today. We will take action to support and encourage social responsibility, volunteering and philanthropy, and make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another.

We will **support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises, and enable these groups to have much greater involvement in the running of public services.**

We will **give public sector workers a new right to form employee-owned co-operatives and bid to take over the services they deliver.**

We will **train a new generation of community organisers and support the creation of neighbourhood groups** across the UK, especially in the most deprived areas.

We will **introduce National Citizen Service. The initial flagship project will provide a programme for 16 year olds** to give them a chance to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and start getting involved in their communities.

We will take a range of measures to encourage volunteering and involvement in social action, including launching a national day to celebrate and encourage social action, and make regular community service an element of civil service staff appraisals.

Social care and Disability

We will establish a commission on long-term care, to report within a year.

We will break down barriers between health and social care funding to incentivise preventative action.

We will extend the greater roll-out of personal budgets to give people and their carers more control and purchasing power.

Taxation

The Government believes that the tax system needs to be reformed to make it more competitive, simpler, greener and fairer.

We will increase the personal allowance for income tax to help lower and middle income earners. We will announce in the first Budget a substantial increase in the personal allowance from April 2011, with the benefits focused on those with lower and middle incomes.

We will seek ways of taxing non-business capital gains at rates similar or close to those applied to income, with generous exemptions for entrepreneurial business activities.

We will increase the proportion of tax revenue accounted for by environmental taxes.

Transport

The Government believes that a modern transport infrastructure is essential for a dynamic and entrepreneurial economy, as well as to improve well-being and quality of life. We need to make the transport sector greener and more sustainable, with tougher emission standards and support for new transport technologies.

We support Crossrail and further electrification of the rail network.

We will support sustainable travel initiatives, including the promotion of cycling and walking, and will encourage joint working between bus operators and local authorities.

We will stop central government funding for new fixed speed cameras and switch to more effective ways of making our roads safer, including authorising 'drugalyser' technology.

Universities and Further Education

We will seek ways to support the creation of apprenticeships, internships, work pairings, and college and workplace training places as part of our wider programme to get Britain working.

We will set colleges free from direct state control and abolish many of the further education quangos. Public funding should be fair and follow the choices of students.

CHAIRMAN