

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/093/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 17 December 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Leader.

Subject: Essex Local Area Agreement 2 – The Epping Forest Story of Place.

Officer contact for further information: Derek Macnab (01992-564000).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992-564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To consider and comment accordingly on the draft Story of Place for the District of Epping Forest, as requested by the Essex Partnership, to assist in the development of the Essex Local Area Agreement 2, and**
- (2) To note the action taken in submitting the draft to the County Council to comply with the deadline set by that Authority.**

Introduction:

1. In October 2007 the District Council received correspondence from the County Council's Head of Community Planning and Regeneration, with respect to the Essex Local Area Agreement 2. Contained with this communication, which was also circulated to the Chairman of the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership and Director of West Essex PCT, was a request to develop a "Story of Place", for the Epping Forest District. This report details how this has been dealt with and seeks the Cabinet's endorsement.

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2. The Essex Partnership (the countywide Local Strategic Partnership) have expressed a desire to ensure that the revised Essex Community Strategy and new Local Area Agreement 2 (LAA 2), properly reflect the diversity of the County and take into account local priorities.

3. In addition to building up a picture from locally adopted Community Strategies, is the notion of "telling the story of place". This concept is being promoted by Central Government, though their guidance note, "Negotiating New Local Area Agreements". In essence, the Government defines "the story of place" in general terms, as a sustainable community strategy that "sets out where the area has come from, where it is at, and where it wants to be, with social, economic and environmental considerations addressed in a "joined up way". The advice goes on to say that the whole Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) should be involved in developing the story of place, to include districts, third sector and countrywide public sector bodies.

4. With this consideration in mind all leads of the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership Sub Groups were provided with a series of prompts, and a request to submit a contribution on behalf of their theme. Similarly, the Council's Management Board was asked to contribute. In order to achieve a consistency of presentation, the Council's Public Relations Manager was tasked with bringing together the disparate contributions and writing the draft Story of Place, in a style that our local community could relate to. The Steering Group of the LSP has commented upon the draft, and it is hoped to achieve formal endorsement by the main LSP Board on the 20 December.

5. Unfortunately, because of the tight timescale set by the County for submission, in advance of the countywide partnership forum on the LAA 2, attended by the Leader, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive, on the 10 December, it was not possible to have sign-off by the Cabinet. As such the Cabinet and LSP Board have submitted the draft Story of Place on the clear understanding that it may well change as a result of formal consideration. The draft is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration and comment.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

6. The development of a "Story of Place" is an integral part of the LAA 2 process, in which the Council has been invited to participate. Irrespective of whether the local "Story of Place" had any fundamental bearing on the "Essex Story of Place" the document is a useful joint visioning tool in the development of the new Sustainable Community Strategy, and could form the basis of any future local LAA.

Other Options for Action:

7. It would have been possible to decline to respond to the request to develop the "Story of Place".

Consultation undertaken:

8. Local Strategic Partnership Steering Group, Management Board, West Essex PCT, EFDC Forward Planning.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: - The new LAA 2 will influence funding priorities at a County level and may contain opportunities for Performance Reward Grant.

Personnel: Nil.

Land: Nil.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP reference: N/A.

Relevant statutory powers: Community Wellbeing Act 2000, with respect to the Council's County Leadership role.

Background papers: Letter from Essex County Council's Head of Planning and Regeneration dated 11 October 2007. Contribution from LSP Steering Group.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision reference (if required): Not a Key Decision.