

## REPORT TO THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

### **Topic: New Organisational Structure and Constitutional Arrangements**

#### **Background:**

Contained within the current constitution of the LSP is a commitment to regularly review the structure of the partnership, to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and able to effectively deliver its key aims and objectives.

Members of the partnership have been conscious that the organisation is facing a number of externally driven changes, such as the new Local Area Agreement II for Essex and the requirement to prepare a new Sustainable Community Strategy, in tandem with the Local Development Framework.

As such, the LSP undertook a Strategic Away-Day on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2008, with the purpose of seeking to identify a new way forward. Facilitated by an external consultant, Andrew Holder, the participants on the Away-Day undertook a number of tasks, to:

- Clarify and Refocus the LSP's role in delivering Joint Services.
- Agree in outline the Key Ambitions and Priorities for the next five years.
- Develop a Structure and Way of Working that best fits their Ambitions.

Arising from the outcome of the Away-Day, an Options Paper (previously circulated) for a new Partnership Organisational Structure was considered at a follow up meeting on the 25 November 2008 (minutes attached).

This report seeks the Board's formal approval to the future role, priorities and new Organisational Model identified.

#### **Matters for Consideration:**

##### **1. Refocusing the LSP's Role:**

After a facilitated discussion session at the Away-Day, a general consensus emerged that the LSP should be about adding value to the work of the individual constituent organisations, focussing on outcomes that could not necessarily be achieved by any individual partner working in isolation. It was felt that although the LSP should be a strategic body, it should also be able to commission work to meet its objectives. A stronger emphasis on performance management also emerged along with a reinforcement of the importance of the LSP's advocacy role.

**Recommendation 1 – That the future Key Roles of the LSP should be as follows:**

- **Preparing and ensuring the implementation of a Sustainable Community Strategy for the District, identifying visions and key priorities, monitoring progress annually, and keeping the strategy up-to-date.**
- **Ensuring that the benefit from working together brings over and above what the individual member agencies of the LSP would achieve working alone and, therefore, deliver better services for local people.**
- **Working with the Essex Partnership to improve outcomes in the Epping Forest District through Essex's Local Area Agreement.**
- **Developing an active relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategies and the Local Development Framework, and using both to mutual advantage in achieving sustainable communities.**
- **Bringing together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to provide a forum through which the public, private, voluntary and community sectors can work effectively together to meet local needs and priorities.**
- **Identify and commissioning services to meet needs identified through the Partnership.**
- **Ensuring the strategies of the partnerships belonging to the LSP align with the Sustainable Community Strategy and contribute to the "well-being" of the District.**
- **Promoting the engagement of all Epping Forest's people and communities in decisions about the future of the District, working to ensure that the views of traditionally under represented and hard to reach groups are obtained.**
- **Ensuring that partner organisations adopt the Partnership's aims objectives and endeavour to implement them within and through their own organisations.**
- **Identifying, commenting and lobbying on issues of importance to Epping Forest and local, county, regional, national and European levels. Undertaking an ambassadorial role for the District and promoting the image of Epping Forest.**

## **2. Future Ambitions and Priorities:**

As a result of a scoping exercise, a number of priority areas for the work of LSP were identified, for the period up until 2013.

When participants had time to reflect on the priorities established as part of the scoping exercise, there appeared to be a notable omission regarding the reduction of fear of crime. Fear of crime has consistently been expressed as a concern by the community, in previous consultation responses.

**Recommendation 2 - That the following priorities should be adopted over the next 5 year period for the work of the LSP, to include work to combat the fear of crime:**

- **To reduce current health inequalities, in particular addressing life expectancy variations across the District, recognising the needs of an ageing population.**
- **To improve prospects for young people through the raising of levels of educational attainment and improved delivery of other services for young people.**
- **To protect the special ‘green belt’ character of the areas and reduce the District’s Cabin Footprint, whilst still promoting tourism, economic regeneration, better public transport and the delivery of affordable housing.**
- **To increase access to public services which meet the expressed needs of our residents and improve their quality of life.**
- **To adequately plan for the future through the development of a social care strategy as part of the Local Development Framework.**
- **To work with the local community to reduce the fear of crime, particularly amongst vulnerable groups.**
- **To deliver improved outcomes locally with respect to targets contained within the Essex Local Area Agreement II.**

### **3. Proposed New Structure and Ways of Working:**

The Away-Day clearly identified that there are strengths with the current LSP structure. The LSP encompasses a wide range of agencies and is thus a good vehicle for sharing information and encouraging partnership working. There is logic to the Action Groups aligning themselves to the themes, within the current Community Strategy.

However, the exercise undertaken on reflecting on “lessons learned over the period 2004/08” and the description of the LSP now”, contained at Annex 1 and 2 of the Way-Day Report, appears to suggest that there is a strong case for reshaping and restructuring the way the LSP works.

In particular, some strong views were expressed around the need to streamline the way the LSP is currently structure. It was hoped that this could be achieved by utilising the current optimism amongst partners and the high level of commitment, to adding value to the quality of life of people in Epping Forest. Participants were generally positive about creating a new direction and new goals.

In addition, it was concluded that as a partnership we need to ensure that we have the correct people participating at the right meetings. We also need to strengthen accountability and performance management.

The Options Paper identified a number of new organisational structure models, ranging from the retention of largely the status quo, to Area Based or LAA Orientated. In the event a Fixed Partnership and Task and Finish Model was identified as a preferred solution. This was based on an acceptance that the current nine action groups are too resource intensive. A potential solution would be to reduce the number of fixed thematic Action Groups and use Task and Finish panels to undertake specific areas of work or projects. These Task and Finish Panels would support the work of any fixed thematic Action Group and drawn down on a 'talent pool' of 'on-call' resources in the form of staff from constituent partner organisations.

In the new proposed structure, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and Safer Communities Statutory Partnerships would become two fixed thematic partnership Action Groups. Given the priority placed on Health Inequalities this would become a third. Issues around the Environment, Housing, Transport etc, would fall within a fourth, Sustainable Communities grouping.

The fixed partnerships would be supported by Task Groups as required. The Task and Finish Panels should focus on delivery of key objectives set by the LSP Board and be time-limited. An annual business plan for the LSP will be developed which scopes out annual priorities and resource allocation. The main LSP Board will have a role in receiving "bids" for Task and Finish Panel work thus ensuring priority is given to work which practically delivers on the key aspirations of the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA11 etc.

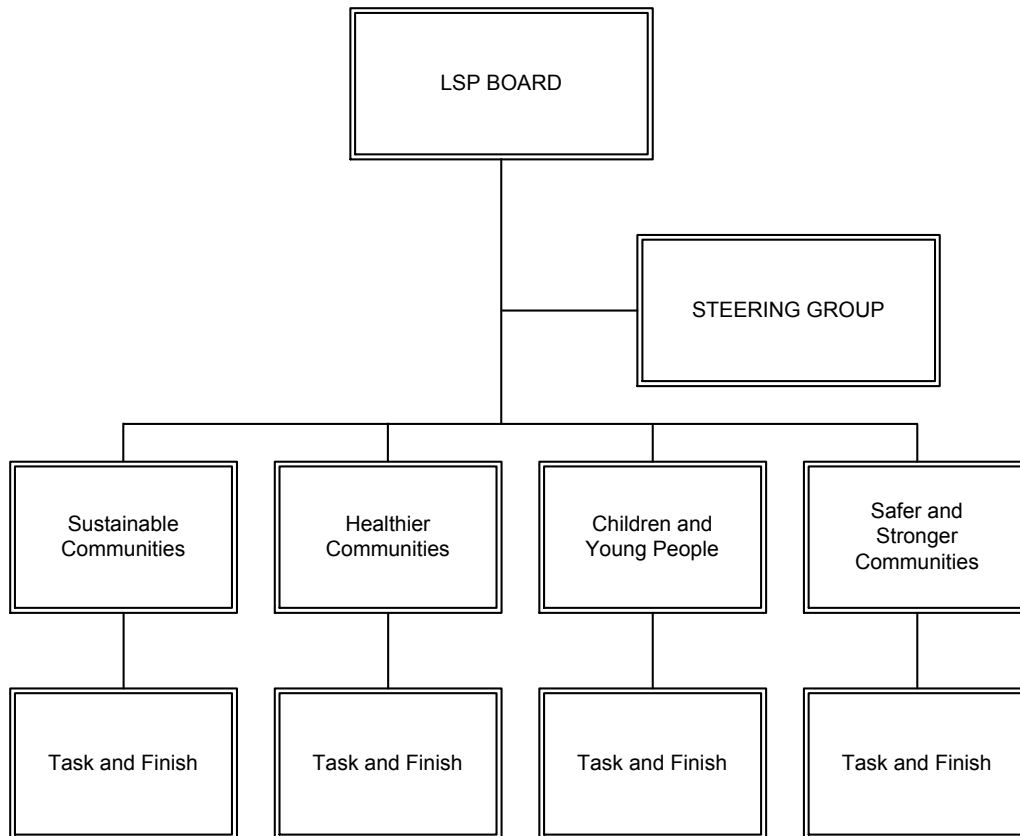
To form the link between the Fixed Thematic Partnership Action Groups and to support the main Partnership Board, it is recommended that a Steering Group is retained. The Steering Group to consist of the 4 Leads of the fixed Thematic Action Groups plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the LSP.

The Steering Group would also be supported by the Local Strategic Partnership Manager. Others could be co-opted onto the Steering Group as circumstances dictate.

The streamlined structure proposed should be more efficient and deliver a more outcome driven focus to the work of the LSP. The advantage of the Task Groups and 'on-call resources' is that it still allows plenty of opportunity to retain the experience and skills of existing members of the current 9 Action Groups. For example, a Task and Finish Group could be developed to work on the Development of the new Sustainable Community Strategy (including its links with the LDF).

Any proposed new Thematic Partnership Action Group could introduce an area dimension to their work or commission specific locality work through or jointly with others, by means of crosscutting Task and Finish Panel.

The following chart illustrates the proposed model and provides an indication of the issues to be addressed in each thematic partnership group.



***Sustainable Communities*** – to incorporate environmental issues, forward planning LDF etc, transport, the natural environment, reduction of carbon footprint, sustainable housing, economic development and regeneration.

***Healthier Communities*** – to incorporate addressing health inequalities, health improvement, Active Epping Forest.

***Children and Young People*** – to incorporate work of the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership and issues around educational attainment.

***Safer and Stronger Communities*** – to incorporate work of Safer Communities Partnership.

**Recommendation 3 – That the LSP Board adopt the Fixed Partnership and Task and Finish Panel Structure, to include 4 new Thematic Action Groups i.e:**

- Sustainable Communities**
- Healthier Communities**
- Children and Young People**
- Safer and Stronger Communities.**

#### **4. Alignment of Existing Action Groups:**

Having determined the 4 new Main Thematic Action Groups of the Local Strategic Partnership, it is necessary to re-align the current Action Groups. An indication of possible areas of work to be covered was contained within the

Options Paper and is illustrated above. Following this approach a potential realignment would be as follows:

**Sustainable Communities to incorporate:**

Green and Unique Action Group  
Homes and Neighbourhoods Action Group  
Economic Prosperity Action Group  
Getting About Action Group  
Lifelong Learning Action Group

**Healthier Communities to incorporate:**

Active Epping Forest Action Group

**Children and Young People to incorporate:**

Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

**Safer and Stronger Communities:**

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

On this basis it can be seen that the Sustainable Communities Thematic Group picks up the majority of the existing Action Group work. This may be an issue in terms of workload and balance. In addition, the Multi-Faith Forum which has been a relatively late addition to the LSP, could be potentially placed under several of the Thematic Action Groups or indeed could become a standing Task and Finish Panel.

**Recommendation 4:**

**That the Board consider the alignment of the current Action Groups against the 4 new Thematic Action Groups.**

**5. Membership of Board, Steering Group and Thematic Action Groups and Task and Finish Panels:**

When discussed at the follow-up meeting to the Away-Day, it was generally agreed that for continuity and to retain the current advantages in terms of partnership development and communication, that the current composition of the full Board is retained. However, it was also felt that a more robust focus should be placed on reviewing the membership on an ongoing basis to reflect changing circumstances.

**Recommendation 5:**

**(i) That the current composition of the full LSP Board be retained subject to a commitment to ongoing review.**

As highlighted earlier in the report, it is proposed that the revised Steering Group which supports the full Board, should have a stronger role in performance management, monitoring and evaluation. It may also have an enhanced role in identifying issues, which Task and Finish Panels may need to be established to

address and the commissioning of bespoke pieces of work. In order for the new Steering Group to retain an overview of the work of the 4 Thematic Groups and also to be of a manageable size, it is recommended that the Steering Group comprises of the Chairmen of the 4 Thematic Groups plus the Full Board Chairman and Vice Chairman.

**Recommendation 5:**

**(ii) That the Steering Group will be responsible for performance management, monitoring and evaluation on behalf of the Full LSP Board, as well as commissioning work and establishing Task and Finish Panels should comprise of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Full Board plus the 4 Thematic Action Group Chairmen.**

The Thematic Action Groups comprise of the two current statutory Partnerships in the District, namely the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Both of these Partnerships have existing Membership arrangements, which are proving largely satisfactory and not in need of any significant change at this point.

The other two new Thematic Groups are Sustainable Communities and Healthier Communities. It has already been identified that Sustainable Communities could incorporate some 5 existing Action Groups.

The LSP will need to consider how the Membership of these other two Thematic Groups is established. It would perhaps be too prescriptive for the Full Board to dictate this from the outset, perhaps better to allow some scoping work to be undertaken by the existing participants.

A potential way forward may therefore be to bring together the key individuals/partners for the existing Thematic Groups e.g. the Chairmen of the 5 existing groups that make up the new Sustainable Communities Group and the key partners within Active Epping Forest, to review their existing Action Plans, develop their own draft Terms of Reference and membership proposals. These could then be submitted for consideration by an initial meeting of the Steering Group and subsequent adoption by the Full Board.

**Recommendation 5:**

**(iii) That the existing membership and terms of reference of the CDRP and CYPSP be retained within the new LSP Structure, and**

**(iv) That an initial scoping meeting of the Sustainable Communities Group is held to involve the Chairman of the 5 previous Action Groups and similarly with Healthier Communities to involve key health partners, to review current Action Plans, develop draft terms of reference and develop membership proposals for consideration by the Steering Group and Full Board.**

Task and Finish Panels are proposed to be established to work to a specific brief in a prescribed timescale. Panels can operate on a more informal basis and can involve any individual across the partnership or indeed draw down from a talent pool from agencies, as specific skills require.

**Recommendation 5:**

- (v) **That Task and Finish Panels are established on a more informal multi-agency basis.**

**6. Chairmanships of Groups:**

Arrangements for the Chairmanship and Vice Chairmanship of the Full Board are detailed within the current constitution. These are not recommended for change.

The Chairman of the current Steering Group is the Chairman of the Homes and Neighbourhood Action Group, which is likely to be incorporated within Sustainable Communities. The new Steering Group is composed of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the full LSP. The two statutory partnerships (i.e. CDRP and CYPSP) have their own arrangements for the election of Chairmen, who will sit on the Steering Group. That leaves the Healthier Communities and Sustainable Communities Groups to establish their Chairmen.

The Board could leave it to the Groups to appoint their own Chairs or alternatively seek to propose a lead agency, for example, the PCT to lead Healthier Communities or the District Council to lead Sustainable Communities.

Once established, the Steering Group could similarly either nominate its own Chairman or elect to have the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the full Board, take the Chair.

**Recommendation 6:**

**The Board are asked to consider and propose how Chairmanship of the Steering Group and Thematic Action Groups are established.**

**7. Constitutional Changes:**

A draft new Constitution is attached which seeks to reflect the potential changes to the future organisational arrangements of the LSP. The key changes are highlighted.

**Recommendation 7:**

**The Board are asked to agree the changes to the LSP Constitution arising out of the review of the role, priorities and organisational structure.**