

REPORT TO LSP BOARD

SUBJECT : SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (SCS):UPDATE

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DATE : 28 May 2009

1.0 Purpose

To update members of the LSP Board on progress made on taking forward the refresh of the SCS, and to seek guidance on next steps.

2.0 Recommendations

That members note and comment on the attached draft SCS structure and outline project plan which has been produced as a basis for discussion.

3.0 Background

3.1 An initial scoping meeting has been held to discuss issues and options around refreshing the SCS. This discussed key outcomes required, effective linkages with the Local Development Framework (LDF), and opportunities to demonstrate 'added value' in the strategy. A key outcome of this meeting was recognition that to be relevant in such a diverse district the SCS must have a degree of 'localism', where different communities can see their needs reflected in the document. A first step to the process was agreed, this would bring together available data at ward levels to build up a profile of the district, how it is changing, the factors generating change and impact on communities. Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council would run this stage in conjunction with research work to underpin the LDF. A second stage would be to approach the county for funding for consultation, as part of their enhanced engagement programme round National Indicator 4, and hold initial discussions with VAEF about leading this element of the SCS work on behalf of the partnership.

4.0 Update

- 4.1 Since the last meeting of the LSP Board discussions with several members of the partnership have been held to plan and agree future approaches. Exploratory discussions with the officers responsible for producing the LDF have been held. Government guidance indicates that where possible the SCS should play a key role in defining core policy of the LDF. Work has been undertaken to develop a key document/strategy list that will feed into the SCS, and an initial list has been produced. Officers have been identified in the Planning Department to support the initial research process, which will help produce the SCS and the LDF, and a meeting has been held with county to coordinate efforts.
- 4.2 Work with the ECC engagement team has developed around pulling together a data picture of the district, using a wide variety of sources. Pulling this comprehensive information together is proving to be quite a challenge, although it is hoped that the second draft of the 'data picture will be available to be tabled at the meeting.

- 4.3 ECC have confirmed that up to £10,000 will be available to support a community engagement/consultation programme around developing the community strategy. This programme will involve the voluntary sector managing and leading the engagement process. Initial discussions have confirmed that VAEF would be happy to undertake this work in principle, though further discussions would need to be held defining exactly what was required.
- 4.4 Harlow 20/20 have been approached to examine the potential of 'joining up' some consultation work as both LSPs will be reviewing their Community Strategies at the same time. However they feel that this is not something they wish to do at the present time.
- 4.5 The LSP manager has attended the CYPSP away day in order to provide an opportunity for members of the theme group to feed into discussions on the nature and content of the SCS at an early stage. This also looked at the best way theme groups could help shape the document. A number of potential priority issues and objectives were identified as a first trawl of ideas where the SCS could add value. It may be appropriate for Safer Communities to undertake a similar exercise and feed into the production of an early draft, but it is unlikely that the Health theme group and the Sustainable theme group could undertake a similar exercise so early in their development. Other methods would need to be developed to populate these sections, though much data clearly already exists around the JSNA. Guidance is sought on the best way forward to help produce the initial draft SCS. It has been suggested that a mini Board away day could be held to brainstorm issues and options and help frame the vision, and values/ key objectives that might comprise the consultation draft.

5.0 Future Plans

- 5.1 Attached at appendix one is a draft outline of a project plan for the production of the SCS to aid discussion. This highlights some of the key stages in the production of the strategy, based around an initial research stage, taking soundings from key partners, a consultation stage, culminating in a community conference, and a final drafting stage leading to the agreement of the Strategy at December LSP Board meeting. Views on this approach are sought.
- 5.2 Attached at appendix 2, again as a prompt for discussion, is a list of potential sections and structure for the SCS document. This basically follows a formula of sections lead by different members of the partnership, and highlighting key issues, why we think they are important, what we intend to do about them, and how we will know if we are successful. The intention at the moment is that the SCS should be a Strategic long term plan concentrating on outcomes. It would be refreshed every three years but would require an annual delivery plan to be produced. The SCS could then be used to inform the Corporate Plans of participating partners.
- 5.3 The views of the LSP Board are sought on the best way forward on these various issues at this stage. It would also be helpful if some guidance were given on the structure of the Community Conference

in the autumn to consult/sign off the SCS. Suggestions on potential keynote speakers would be particularly welcome.

6.0 Conclusion

The SCS offers the opportunity to provide a clear vision, and structure to the work of the LSP and its constituent parts. It provides the chance to define what represents real 'added value' in the Epping Forest context. Given the importance of the document for all the partners, particularly those subject to inspection, it warrants spending sometime 'getting it right'. This means understanding the key messages from the data analysis and getting 'buy in' and ownership of the document and its objectives, through extensive consultation with partners.