

EPPING FOREST LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

Date: 24 September 2009

Time: 2.00 - 4.00 pm

MINUTES

Present:

Catherine O'Connell	(C'OC)	Locality Director, West Essex Primary Care Trust (Vice Chair)
David Anstey	(DA)	Lee Valley regional Park Authority
Keith Brown	(KB)	Federation of Small Businesses
Quentin Buller	(QB)	Head of Partnership Services, Epping Forest College
Reverend Gay Ellis	(GE)	Representing Faith Communities
Jacqui Foile	(JF)	Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Epping Forest
John Gilbert	(JG)	Chair Epping Forest SCP (CDRP)
Councillor Anne Grigg	(AG)	Chair Sustainable Communities Theme Group, EFDC
Councillor Ann Haigh	(AH)	Chair of Epping Forest Faith Forum, EFDC
Caroline Skinner	(CS)	Epping Forest CYPSP
Councillor Brian Surtees	(BS)	Representing Town and Parish Councils
Colin Thompson	(CT)	Representing Town and Parish Councils
Yvette Wetton	(YW)	Essex County Council

Presenting Items:

John de Wilton Preston	(JP)	Chair of Credit Crunch Task and Finish Panel, Director of Planning, EFDC
John Houston	(JH)	LSP Manager, Chair Communications Task and Finish Panel
Perryn Jasper	(PJ)	CYPSP Development Manager
Tess Wisbey	(TW)	Community Engagement Officer, Essex Police
Lonica Vanclay	(LV)	ECC, Head of Locality Commissioning

Supporting Officers:

Colin Rowell	LSP Administrator
David Wright	LSP Administrator

Apologies:

Councillor Di Collins	Epping Forest District Council Chairman
Alison Cowie	Director of Public Health, West Essex PCT
Derek Macnab	Deputy Chief Executive, Epping Forest District Council
Ray Skinner	Essex Fire Service
P Thomson	City of London Corporation
Sue Wainwright	Jobcentre Plus
Simon Williams	Essex Police
Jeannie Wright	Principal, Epping Forest College

1. WELCOME/ NEW MEMBERS/APOLOGIES

CO'C chaired the meeting in Councillor Mrs Collins' absence. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and a round of introductions was done for the benefit of new members. Apologies were read out for those people listed above.

QB welcomed everyone to the Epping Forest College and offered to take those interested on a tour of the facilities following the meeting. CO'C thanked QB on behalf of the LSP for the use of the college and the arrangements for this meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (09/06/2009)/MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of the last meeting (9th June 2009) were **agreed** as a true record.

JH reported that all matters arising were either on track or closed. There were no questions and no further matters arising.

3. ASPIRE TO PERFORM REPORT

CO'C introduced the Aspire2Perform (A2P) health check report by saying that it painted a really good picture of the LSP and had some useful recommendations for follow-up. JH started by thanking all 16 participants in the exercise and gave an overview of the process. A summary of the report was tabled. JH reported that no real areas of weakness were found and that the interviewers had been impressed by the commitment of the partners. The speed with which the two Task and Finish teams had been set up and run to completion was singled out as a success for the LSP as was the LSP's use of VAEF in the Community Strategy consultation process. The report stated, among other things, that while the new structure was the right way to go, there was some duplication between Board and Steering Group and that the Board was being drawn into operational matters. It was **agreed** that the February Board Awayday should be used to look at the recommendations and how to move to a situation where the Board concentrated on the strategic, the Steering Group became the executive body with the Theme Groups and Task and Finish teams managing the operations.

CO'C added her thanks to all who took part and concluded that many of the positive responses to the interview questions were largely looking to the future and not looking back, which she considered quite helpful in terms of what the LSP should look like.

In the debate that followed, CT questioned whether this was a return to a three tier structure. JH responded by saying that the A2P report recommended that the Board has a strategic focus leaving the Steering group to oversee the Theme Groups. BS said that if the Board is to move to thinking more strategically then members would need help in understanding where and how they could contribute. CO'C responded by adding that each partner organisation needed to share excellence across the partnership. JH suggested that an 'excellence day' be held with all organisations present to determine better and smarter spending to pre-empt the major cuts in public spending that are expected. He added that the LSP needs to move from the role of narrator to that of honest broker, making use of pooled budgets, resources and services.

KB welcomed the recommendation regarding the LSP's influence on local commissioning and added that, where possible tenders that are on offer should be of a suitable size to allow local businesses and charities to bid.

CO'C endorsed this and said that this feeds in to a later item about working in partnership with other LSPs. It was agreed that JH, with partner support organise an excellence in public service seminar.

Action 01 JH

4. CHALLENGING THE CREDIT CRUNCH

JP presented a summary of the findings of the 'Meeting the Challenge of the Credit Crunch' Task and Finish team. He started by emphasising how important and timely this report was because of the number of people affected by the recession. The situation is complex, he stated, with contradictory indicators of the situation e.g. approaching 4m unemployed but news of houses selling within 2 weeks. However, the work of the team had shown that there is positive support from many organisations and that one common message was clear – seek help early. JP reported on some of the initiatives that had been already put in place e.g. Councillor Whitbread as the Business champion had been well received by both the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Chamber of Commerce. JP requested that the Board endorse the report and the recommendations in section 2 highlighting the need for further work, for example on Credit Unions.

In the discussion following the presentation, AG reported on the first meeting of the Sustainable Communities theme group which met on 18/9. She said she was delighted to receive the report from JP at the meeting and that actions from the report would be followed up by the group.

KB gave his support to the report and brought attention to one of the actions arising from the team: the 'Beat the Recession' event to be held in Theydon Bois on 22/10.

BS asked if there was any way in which the existing Credit Unions in the district could be grouped to give a wider coverage. JP was unsure that a county-wide amalgamation would work but, locally, people could help with premises etc. GE added that in Waltham Forest the use of churches for the Credit Union had worked well.

JH asked JP whether, on a global level, if we were at the bottom of the recession? JP reflected on how in the build up to G20 (the summit of the major industrialised nations), there appeared to be a competition on which countries were on the up and which were not. Locally, he thought that a good indication would be how quickly the units sold in the Bellway Homes development, near the hospital. It is also possible that the recession and recovery will not be U-shaped but will have a double dip.

JH spoke about the Future Jobs Fund, a government initiative aimed at getting 18 to 24 year olds who had been unemployed for a year back into work. The baseline requirements for a bid to be made were that at least 30 new posts of at least 6 months duration of 25 hours per week to be created. The new West Essex partnership of LSP's (Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping Forest) had put together a joint bid for 70-80 jobs, with a total bid amount of approximately £1m. Epping Forest accounts for 35 of these posts which also includes bids from a wide range of local voluntary groups as well as the district council. This application was only made possible by a new approach to joint working with other LSP's.

BS stated that a new estate is to be built in Ongar and asked whether the LSP could help with incentives to the main contractor to use local labour rather than labour

brought in from other areas? JH referred to the earlier point made by KB regarding the A2P recommendation on local commissioning and agreed that this would be good but there are possible issues with European law and procurement practice. KB said that Basildon council is writing into contracts that a certain percentage of work must go to local businesses. It was **agreed** that a copy of the Basildon guidance should be obtained, and reviewed to see if this is something that might be helpful in Epping Forest.

ACTION 02 JH

Members **agreed** to endorse the report but it was **agreed** that the **prioritisation of the recommendations in section 8 would be carried out by the Sustainable Communities Theme Group.**

Action 03 AG

CO'C thanked the team for the report which was informative, increasing everyone's level of understanding. She added that it was an excellent example that endorsed the Task and Finish method of working.

5. CYPSP UPDATE / REVIEW

LV started by summarising the rationale behind the move from the current structure of 11 CYPSPs within the county to a Children's Trust Board (CTB) approach. The new structure, in line with government legislation, is designed to improve ways of working. The Children's Trust review is now complete and the resultant report summarises the consultations. LV, with the aid of a slide, explained the new structure. Reporting into the Essex Partnership will be a county level CTB below which there will be a Children's Trust Joint Commission Board (CTJCB) and below that, a number of Local CTBs. Reporting into both the CTJCB and the local CTBs will be Implementation Groups. The draft terms of reference have been written for the new boards. The final report from the review will recommend, to a meeting on 2/10, that there be 5 Local CTBs (one of which will map to West Essex) to be in place for November. There will be a meeting of the Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping Forest CYPSPs on 8/10 to discuss how the needs of each district can be met by the new structure. It was reported that Harlow wants to keep a geographical themed group within a West Essex Children's Trust Board. A meeting on 29/9 of Epping Forest CYPSP/COGs will discuss and identify geographical and themed deliveries. There may be advantages in keeping some services local, but joining up other services across the district to form a West Group – to provide mental health services for example. Groups are waiting for guidance from County on the way forward for developing the framework and carrying out local needs analysis. All analysis work undertaken will focus on what happens at County level, at West level and at individual District level. Membership of the West Essex Local CTB is under discussion but each of the three district councils and the three LSP's should be represented.

CS reported that Epping Forest CYPSP had concerns about local representation but she hoped that a workshop would resolve these. AH added that it was essential that there was a local element in both strategic and operational aspects. She hoped that when decisions are made that this is taken into consideration and that Epping Forest is not forgotten. CS reassured the Board that representation on the CT Boards would ensure local issues are reflected. LV added that the workshop on 8/10 would address this issue.

CT stated that reorganisations often resulted in a drop in the level of service during the changeover and sought assurance that this would not happen. LV replied that the CYPSP to CTB change would not have an immediate impact on frontline services.

BS asked that the new structure and how it works be publicised to ensure that local organisations and people are aware. LV outlined the work underway to publicise the CTB and how it will provide services and resources.

JH stated that when he first started in post, Epping forest CYPSP was put forward as an example of excellence so it is understandable that people are anxious about how the new structure will work. He thought it important that the LSP Board did not lose its influence and that communication paths be in place. On an operational level, the LSP needed to know what would be happening to the PRG funding allocated to the EF CYPSP and for which the LSP has oversight responsibility.

CO'C reminded members that when, 3 years ago, the three very distinct district PCTs merged to form the West Essex PCT similar concerns were expressed. However, the merged West Essex PCT worked, enabling more focused use of available resources.

CO'C thanked LV for the report.

6. IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

Speaking to the Report from the Improving Communications Task and Finish team, JH started by outlining the team's brief which was to identify issues and options for improving communications, to raise the profile of the LSP and to do so quickly. He listed some of the initiatives already in place: webcasting of Board meetings, the Partnership Briefing and the updated website. JH informed members that this meeting would be the last under the old name and logo as the renamed LSP and the new logo would be launched shortly. The new website would be live on 30/9. Work on 'Introduction to the LSP' leaflets was underway as was the consultation exercise with 'Your Voice Matters' leaflets ready to distribute next Wednesday. JH thanked Essex County Council for the £10k to support the consultation programme. The two major actions still outstanding were the Citizen's Panel and the joint magazine both of which could bring major savings to participating partners. However, the LSP support team did not have the capacity to carry these initiatives forward so JH asked for volunteers to lead on this. CO'C said that the PCT PR department was understaffed because of long term sick leave but they fully supported both initiatives and while it may be difficult to carry this work forward now, it must not be lost sight of. She felt that there should be enough resource available between all the agencies. JF said that VAEF would be happy to participate in both a joint news letter and citizen's panel but could not commit to leading on any aspects. **CO'C said they would discuss this further outside of the meeting and bring it back to the Board.**

Action 04 CO'C

BS said that one of the difficulties in raising the LSP profile was that there was no immediate discernable benefit. He suggested that promoting the LSP as an avenue for the public to get a voice might give it its unique selling point.

CO'C thanked the team (JH, QB, June Bevan (PCT) and Tom Carne (EFDC)) and looked forward to seeing the new branding in action.

7. REPORT FROM STEERING GROUP

JH spoke about the new format Steering Group report, 'Review of LSP Activity', and asked for feedback from members on suitability of this pilot. The new report format was designed to free up time at the Board for discussion on more strategic items by

bringing the operational issues together in a single report. JH went through the summary report touching on those items not covered elsewhere in the meeting.

JH asked the Board to agree report item 3.1 iv) which was to set up a Task and Finish team to explore opportunities for better joint working and shared services across West Essex. LV said that this would complement the new WE Local CTB. CO'C stated that potential public service funding cuts had focused attention on efficiencies to be derived working with other districts and that it would be sensible for the partnership to get involved. JF supported this saying that the voluntary sector was already sharing some services across the three voluntary organisations within West Essex. JG expressed concern about the size of task and the timing with regard to budgets being finalised. CO'C responded by saying that we will always be up against budget cycles but we will need to get over those issues. She added that some opportunities would find funding while others would not be immediately implementable and that we should focus on two or three areas rather than the whole gamut. She said that **the PCT would nominate someone to participate**. BS agreed with JG that it is a massive task but thought the team could investigate compatibility and communication synergies which are less cost dependent. CT added a word of caution. If the work could result in job losses then it would need to be handled sensitively. CO'C agreed that it needed to be handled carefully but the objective was best use of resources and not cutting jobs. AH said residents have commented that locally targeted publicity is a key issue. CO'C suggested that this is an area to explore. JH suggested that the team should explore the whole area, identify potential opportunities and ramifications then report back to the board with findings and recommendations. There are almost certainly major reductions in Public Service funding on the way but this T&F team could be the vehicle to get the district ahead of the curve in identifying cost efficiencies. The Board **agreed that the Task and Finish team be set up with this broad scope and to come back with recommendations.**

Action 05 JH

JH reported that both new theme groups had met (report item 3.1 v). CO'C expanded saying that the Healthier Communities Theme Group's first meeting had been productive, with agreement on the focus for the group being those areas of the district where life expectancy was lowest. An initial work plan had been agreed as well as the terms of reference which she pointed out had been significantly altered to the one distributed for this meeting.

A brief outline was given by JH on the developing West Essex Partnership (report item 3.1.vi). An initial meeting of the three district LSP Chairs and managers had looked at opportunities for better cross border working that would support the work of the individual LSP's. Out of these discussions the Future Jobs Fund bid had been developed and submitted. All three LSP's are committed to working together where possible in the future, and will meet quarterly to assess progress.

CS updated the meeting on the status of the Waltham Abbey Young Peoples Information Centre (WAYPIC). For various reasons the original WAYPIC closed but there is enthusiasm and the possibility of funding to re-establish an information centre that is complementary to existing services, not in competition. Currently a draft business case is being developed for submission to potential funders. CO'C noted that the project has the backing of the LSP. CS stated that the project group would be reporting in to the HC TG.

It was noted that the recent Audit Commission visit was a success. The group visited Epping Forest College for lunch and were very impressed with the facilities. The LSP will organise a similar event for officers from Go-East.

The LSP is sponsoring a 'Beat the Recession - Boost Sales' seminar on 22nd October at Theydon Bois Village Hall.

JG outlined the Safer Communities Partnership (SCP) public consultation event. This will take place on Nov 17 between 3:00 and 8:00 pm at Waltham Abbey Town Hall. There will be a number of stalls during the day and a public consultation in the evening. The event will look at bridging the gap between actual and perceived levels of crime.

An SCP scrutiny panel will take place on Oct 27. This meeting will be restricted to EFDC councilors only. A public meeting will be held in Feb 2010.

TW gave an update on the Prevent strategy – designed to challenge all forms of extremism. The key elements of the strategy are Pursue, Prepare, Protect and Prevent. The prevent element was introduced as a result of the 2007 London bombings. The key strands of this element are challenging, disrupting and stopping radicalization, and community involvement. A new team has been set up in Essex which is looking to improve neighborhood policing.

JG gave an update on NI 35. It has not been forgotten that feedback to the LSP Board is due. There has been a local incident, which has resulted in SCP working closely with adjoining London boroughs. JG noted that the level of tension in the district was currently low, but this could change.

JH noted that the LSP annual Stakeholder event will now take place on the morning of Dec 11 at Theydon Bois Village Hall and asked that all Board members put this date in their diary. The theme of the event will be taking forward and agreeing the new Sustainable Community Strategy. An initial invitation list of potential stakeholders will be circulated to Board members shortly for comment

8. LAA PROJECT UPDATE

PJ gave an update on the status of the 2009 EF CYPSP projects funded with support from performance reward grant allocated by the Board. The bidding process to launch the projects is largely complete with suppliers having been awarded projects. In most cases contracts are drawn up and awaiting signature. AH pointed out that it was important that service users are pointed to the correct and relevant organisations. PJ said that it is his role to ensure referral pathways are in place to make sure that the population who most need these services are referred by the appropriate agency and that, for example, the parents of the young people who had been identified as possible candidates of entering the youth justice system were supported by the Relate parenting project.

9. AOB

JP raised the East of England Plan for discussion. In the past the LSP has been asked to comment on the Plan. The Regional Assembly has been working on the plan to 2031 and Parish Councils have been notified. It was agreed that there should be a mechanism for the LSP Board to comment on the Plan. JP gave an overview of the Plan. The focus is on housing and gives a number of growth scenarios. A simple rolling forward of the 2021 plan requires a build of 160 homes per year. If a population led scenario is followed, the District will need to build 550 new homes per year. The Plan also states that a high proportion of Harlow development is likely to be in adjacent districts, which would have a major impact on housing development in

the Epping Forest District. **CO'C suggested a summary of the paper be created by JP for the LSP Board.** JP noted that such a report is being submitted to Cabinet on Nov 16th and can be shared with the LSP Board. **Action 06 JP**

JH congratulated CO'C, on behalf of the Board, on her appointment as West Essex PCT Chief Executive. CO'C said she was very excited by her new role and said that Aidan Thomas had done an excellent job as her predecessor.

The meeting was closed at 4:00 pm

10. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Next meeting – 17th December 2009

Following meetings – 18th March 2010 and 17th June 2010