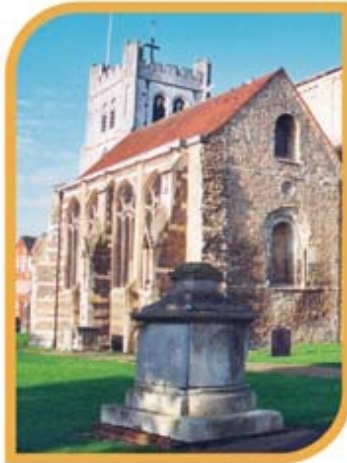




Review of the Year 2009-10

A short report setting out the main achievements of the Local Strategic Partnership for Epping Forest over the last twelve months.



Making Epping Forest a great place to live, work, study and do business.

March 2010

The draft Annual Report, discussed at the Board Awayday in February, is to be approved by the Board on 18th March and be published on One Epping Forest Website. A highlight article will appear in the Forester.

Foreword

Welcome to the first Annual Review produced by One Epping Forest to keep stakeholders and residents up to date with the activities on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) over the last year. It was agreed, following a review of our communications, that we needed to work much harder to keep everyone aware of what the partnership was doing and what it was achieving on behalf of local communities. This Annual Review is one way we are trying to do this, along with producing a new website www.oneeppingforest.org.uk and webcasting our Board meeting.

As you will see from the following report we have had a very busy and successful year. The partnership has changed the way it works, and secured significant eternal resources to support a variety of local schemes and projects, and has helped build new partnerships to better represent the interests of our district on a wider stage. The partnership has also been successful in providing a forum where all the major service providers in our district, from the public, private and voluntary sectors can come together and discuss common issues and problems and build a wider understanding of how we can all work better together to address them.

Over the coming years the partnership will need to address a number of critical challenges to help keep Epping Forest a place where people aspire to live. Our new Sustainable Community Strategy, which is being written at the moment following extensive public consultation, will help set out a blueprint for how we will tackle these issues. However, this will need to be done against a backdrop of increasing demand for public services flowing from the recession, increasing public expectations, significant economic disadvantage in some parts of our district and inevitably reducing budgets. This will provide a challenge for all our partners and we may need to significantly change the way we work together through initiatives such as 'Total place' to give our citizens the best services at a price they can afford to pay.

This is our first Annual Review and I hope you find it helpful in explaining what the partnership is all about. We would very much welcome any comments and suggestions about how we could improve it,. Contact the LSP administration team by email at lspadmin@oneeppingforest.org.uk or telephone 01992 564454.

Councillor Diana Collins

Chairman One Epping Forest

Introduction

This short briefing has been produced to give partners, stakeholders and residents information on the work of the partnership over the last year.

The activities described below have been delivered with the support and enthusiasm of individuals from across the business, government and the third sector agencies that make up the partnership. The partnership has given these individuals a structured and effective way of working better together, sharing information and expertise, coordinating activities and achieving outcomes.

Progress Report

The Annual Review is set out under the headings of the main objectives the partnership has been pursuing while the Sustainable Community Strategy is being updated.

Develop the structures and procedures of the Partnership to enable it to deliver

Over the last year the new structure of the LSP has been agreed and been implemented. The Board has been expanded to include senior representatives from the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Federation of Small Business, Jobcentre Plus, the Police Authority and secondary schools.

A new executive Steering Group has been established and membership agreed. The eight action groups have been replaced by a mixed structure of Task and Finish teams and standing Theme Groups. The four Theme groups, Healthier Communities, Sustainable Communities, Safer Communities Partnership, and the Children's Partnership are now established, with membership and terms of reference agreed. Detailed work programmes have been or are now being developed in all groups.

Three Task and Finish teams have been established around the 'Credit Crunch', 'Improving Communications' and developing a new 'Sustainable Community Strategy'. Two of these teams (Credit Crunch and Communications) have already completed their work, initiated a number of actions and made recommendations which have been agreed (see appendix 1 and 2.) The Community Strategy Task and Finish team will complete its work by June 2010. A fourth Task and Finish team has been proposed around 'Opportunities for shared services/efficiency savings across West Essex' and this has now been agreed with partners in Harlow 20/20 and Uttlesford Futures. A major seminar will be held in the spring to launch this new project, select areas for detailed analysis and review and make recommendations for joining up and aligning/pooling budgets where appropriate.

The recruitment of a new LSP manager and additional administrative Officer were completed, ensuring that the partnership had capacity to deliver, and develop its agenda for the first time in a number of years.

An independent review of the effectiveness of the partnership was commissioned and carried out by the East of England Regional Assembly. This 'Aspire to Perform' review was conducted during the summer and its positive conclusions reported to the September Board meeting.

Raise Awareness of the LSP, Its role and achievements

A Task and Finish team made up of partners from the district council, the Primary Care Trust and Epping Forest College reviewed current performance and made several recommendations for improvement which were subsequently agreed by the Board.

Achievements to date have included,

- adopting a new name and logo,
- producing an introductory leaflet explaining the role and composition of the Board,
- a new partnership website (hit rate increased from 1600 over two years to 5,000+ since October),
- production of promotional items, new display banners for stalls, press releases at Board meeting,
- 'Partnership Briefing' an electronic newsletter produced after every Board meeting and distributed widely to key stakeholders,
- and quarterly articles in 'Fair's Fair'.

One Epping Forest Board meetings are now webcast to encourage greater openness and accountability. The launch of the major consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy was also used to publicise the work of the partnership and raise awareness of the new name and logo. Partners are, however, still aware that this is an area for development and the need for all elements of the partnership to properly brand and acknowledge the role of the LSP in their work.

The LSP Manager has also given presentations on the role and achievements of the LSP to a number of meetings including the Council's Overview and Scrutiny committee and Local Councils Liaison Committee.

Explore new opportunities for securing additional funding and investment in the area.

This issue was identified by partners as one of significant weakness, with members feeling that county/regional/national funding agencies were unaware of the difficulties facing the district and that the area fared much worse than other places in securing outside support/funding.

An opportunity to bid for support to the government (Future Jobs Fund) to help long term unemployed young people in the district was identified as part of the Credit Crunch Task and Finish programme. A joint bid was developed with LSP's in Harlow and Uttlesford, and eventually almost 30 local groups across West Essex participated. The bid was successful, one of only two in the eastern region, and the first of 160 posts were filled in January. The programme will potentially bring an additional £1million of government support into West Essex, passing much of it directly to local partners to respond to local demands. The Department of Work and Pensions has now approached the partnership with an offer to greatly expand the scheme and discussions are currently underway with a number of other potential providers.

Bids to the Essex Partnership Performance Reward Grant programme were successful and a total of £453k secured over two years to support eight local schemes approved and recommended by the partnership. These schemes are being delivered locally under the umbrella of the partnership.

Core funding of £68K to support the ongoing work of the partnership was again secured. Of this total, £45k came from ECC, £10k from EFDC, £10k from West Essex PCT and Essex Police gave £3k (down from £5k in previous years). This core funding meets the salary costs of the LSP manager and the administration team, together with management costs of VAEF (Voluntary Action Epping Forest) who employ and manage the administration team, and the general running costs of the partnership, including meeting costs, publicity/webcasting etc. Approaches have been made to the Essex Partnership to allocate new funding to provide core support to LSPs in Essex beyond 2012, given the increasing importance for partnership working in meeting the public sector deficit.

A further grant of £10k was secured from ECC and passed to VAEF to support the major public consultation/community engagement programme on the Sustainable Community Strategy.

In order to enhance the partnership's strategic capacity and ability to bid for further external support and to prepare for 'Total Place', a bid was submitted to EERA on behalf of West Essex for external consultancy support. This was successful and 30 days consultancy support was agreed. This included consultancy support for the Board Awayday, the costs of which were previously met locally.

Epping Forest LSP helped support work led by Harlow 20/20 to bid for the government's Migration Fund which looks at supporting the needs of migrant workers in the area. This was successful and £250k was awarded to Integrated Support Services (ISS), a charity based in Harlow. A worker has since been employed to lead work in the Epping Forest area.

Build more effective working relationships with local and regional government and raise awareness of the issues facing the district

One Epping Forest has helped lead efforts to establish a coalition to enhance cross-border working, strengthen the voice of the district partnership at a county and regional level and support our ability to bid for funds in competition with other partnerships (Havens, Gateways etc). The West Essex Partnership covering Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford has now been established, Terms of Reference and composition have been agreed and it has already been responsible for sponsoring a number of successful bids (see Future Jobs above). A web page advertising the partnership and its role has been produced locally and can be accessed via the One Epping Forest Website.

The partnership hosted and sponsored an EERA 'Skills and Worklessness Seminar' for Essex partners which helped raise awareness of key issues facing the district and the range of support available to local groups and individuals from various government agencies.

A day long site visit was organised for a team from the Audit Commission to highlight issues, particularly issues of deprivation facing the district and the wide range of good quality partnership work that was ongoing to address them. The team was very impressed with this work which resulted in Partnership Working being given a ranking of good in the subsequent CAA review of the district.

Preparation has already begun for a similar visit for the locality team at Government Office East.

The One Epping Forest Chairman continues to play a very active role on County LSP and the LSP Manager now sits on the County Partnership Performance Management Team. The Chairman and Manager have also attended a number of regional events promoting the role and achievements of One Epping Forest and raising issues of importance to local communities.

Refresh and develop the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) as an 'intelligence led' document and improve data sharing between partners. Ensure it 'adds value' with a real focus on outcomes, giving residents and stakeholders opportunities to influence both its, and the developing Local Development Framework's targets and objectives.

A 60 page draft data profile of the district, 'Shaping the Future', has been produced, supported by ECC and containing information from a wide range of local partners. This looks at demographic, health, education/skills and economic data and identifies trends generating and sustaining change in the district. Produced to provide an intelligence focus for the developing SCS and to complement the public consultation programme, the data profile also acts as a resource for those formulating or reviewing policy and services in the district, and local agencies bidding for external funding. http://www.oneeppingforest.org.uk/documents/FINALShapingtheFuture_Web.pdf

A 'Ward Profile' programme has also been launched designed to complement the district profile, providing a snapshot of data that can be drilled down to ward level. A 20 page profile has now been produced for each of the 32 wards in the district following consultation with elected members and the LSP Board. In addition a report comparing the variations between the wards has also be produced. Again, these will provide a data resource for elected members, local partners and agencies in the process of reviewing or planning new services, or putting bids together for external funds. A new web based Mini Data Observatory has been established and brings all these useful data reports from across the partnership together for the first time in one place, this is accessible directly through the One Epping Forest website. http://www.oneeppingforest.org.uk/MiniObs_Main.html

The largest public consultation programme undertaken by the partnership was launched in the autumn. Supported by colleagues from VAEF, the programme included surveys in 'The Forester' sent to over 60,000 homes, posters and a further 15,000 consultation leaflets with freepost feedback forms, online survey and 'meet the public' events in over twenty locations across the district. Officers attended and spoke at a number of community and business events, and small group/community development work was also undertaken in key areas. A video project was also commissioned finding out from a cross section of residents what was good and bad about life in the district. The consultation culminated in a Stakeholder Conference held at Theydon Bois Village Hall attended by over 100 people and showcasing stalls from 15 local organisations. In total over 1000 residents or stakeholders have registered their views in the 'Your Voice Matters' consultation programme.

The revised strategy is currently being drafted and will be produced and agreed by June 2010.

Promote and manage the delivery of practical projects to enhance the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the district

Safer Communities Partnership

Epping Forest Safer Communities Partnership is continuing the success of 2008-09 where, overall, the area saw a reduction of 8% in the total number of crimes committed. This year it has built on this success with a further reduction of 1%, down from 8096 crimes to 8005. In the same time period, Serious Acquisitive Crime has been reduced by 12%, a reduction of 283 crimes year on year.

There has been a strong partnership focus on Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) targets in Epping Forest, led by ECC and the Essex Casualty Reduction Board. As at November 2009 KSI collisions in Epping Forest have reduced by 32% compared to the same period in 2008. This is outperforming Essex as a whole where they have seen a reduction of 10% for the same period. KSI casualties have reduced by 34% in Epping and in Essex. A successful 'Road Runner' event was organised in February at Davenant School as part of this programme.

The Safer Communities Partnership have been working collaboratively with Harlow and Brentwood Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP's) to tackle the problem of burglaries committed by Cross Border Offenders and have secured funding from the Home Office. In December a 'Communications Plan' was launched starting with radio broadcasts with a crime prevention message and the 'Lock them out' campaign has been launched across the three partnerships. Essex County Council (ECC) has also agreed to fund a six month post based at Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) to work with our neighbouring CDRPs in London and the Home Counties and to develop better relationships with them to tackle acquisitive crime.

Essex Police funded by the partnership ran 'Operation Phobia' throughout the year. This Operation was a focussed anti-burglary operation targeting cross border offenders travelling into the District.

Our core project 'Crucial Crew' was held in June 2009 and for the first time included home schooled children, over 1450 children visited Gilwell to enjoy the event. The 'Reality Roadshow' programme continues to role out across the District's secondary schools with events at Roding Valley and Davenant held in February. 'Reality Roadshow' provides more in-depth workshop discussion sessions and the young people receive advice on staying safe and avoiding becoming involved in crime.

The CCTV at Queens Road, Lower Queens Road car park and the underpass has been subject to a full review and enhancement thanks to a joint project between the partnership and EFDC.

A further highlight was the joint initiative with Roding Valley U3A (University of the 3rd Age) in the production of a drama workshop which was taken across the District to highlight the dangers of artifice burglary to the over 60's

Working together with the British Association of Shooting Clubs the Partnership has produced a new guide to help ensure that country pursuits such a shooting can be undertaken safely. The guide deals with issues such as trespassing and attempts to actively disrupt lawful activity and is likely to be adopted as good practice by the police nationally.

This is only snapshot of the full range of projects the partnership supports and runs throughout the year.

Multi-Faith Forum

The forum has had a successful year with membership steadily growing and a number of events initiated around the issue of supporting community cohesion. The Forum provides a place for discussion and enhancing understanding between different faiths in the district. A successful event was held in Loughton in October to share experience and information on the work of the faith communities in responding to the credit crunch. A new webpage has been produced to provide information on the participants and role of the faith forum. A new community arts project, supported by EFDC is at an advanced state of preparation to positively showcase diversity in the district and the contribution of different peoples to making the district a great place to live work study and do business.

Healthier Communities Theme Group

Established in the autumn 2009 under the leadership of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) the group is just beginning its work. It has, however, agreed its focus, Health Inequalities, and has commissioned research into the pattern of inequality in the district looking in depth at hotspots, where life expectancy is low or declining and has recently completed a prioritisation exercise around its key objectives. The Group has agreed to champion the setting up of the Waltham Abbey Young Persons Information Centre (WAYPIC) and discussions are currently ongoing with potential funders, partners and agencies that may provide premises.

Sustainable Communities Theme Group

Established in autumn 2009, the new Sustainable Communities Theme Group brings together issues and joins up activities of a number of former action groups including, transport/getting about, environment/green issues, housing and economy/prosperity etc. Discussions are currently ongoing with regard to the long term work programme of the group, but membership and terms of reference are confirmed and implementation of the remaining recommendations of the successful Credit Crunch Task and Finish team is well underway. Topic papers have been produced by leads on the issues listed above and these have been fed into the developing Sustainable Community Strategy. The development of the Future Jobs Fund programme will be a key project for the group, as will work around a delivering a major employers' survey, the development of a new economic development strategy and engagement in the production of the Local Development Framework.

Children's Partnership (formerly CYPSP)

Following a critical review of safeguarding children arrangements in Essex and concerns about the effectiveness of current partnership arrangements, a major review of children's services was undertaken in 2009. One of the key outcomes of this review, agreed in late 2009, was the move away from district based Children and Young person Partnerships (CYPSPs) and the establishment of a new West Essex Children's Trust Board covering Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford. However, in order to maintain an advocacy role for Epping Forest and in line with the Children's Trust structure across Essex, a local Children's Partnership has been established. This provides a forum for ongoing coordination of services for children, young people and families in the district and involves all key service providers. Composition and terms of reference for this new group have been agreed and the previous CYPSP priorities identified in August 2009 have been further reviewed to better meet current need and gaps in provision.

Performance Reward Grant (PRG) projects' outcomes

In April 2009, the partnership secured £453k over two years from the Essex Partnership PRG fund to support eight local schemes in priority areas. The focus of these projects reflects the priorities the partnership has set around enhancing the wellbeing and attainment levels of children in the district, tackling crime and supporting vulnerable people. All PRG projects have now had the opportunity to showcase their work at a One Epping Forest board meeting. Set out below are the projects being supported and some key outcomes achieved so far.

EPP3 Feeling Safe

A sum of £20k was awarded to provide a comprehensive guide to services such as crime reduction, home safety etc in the district. The project is proceeding steadily with the website in the final stages of development. The 'Guide to Services' which will be a project for 2010/11, will become even more important when in April 2010, EFDC Safer Communities and VAEF launch a new Safer Homes Scheme for the District, replacing the 'HandyVan Service'. Work is also underway with EFDC Private Sector Housing to ensure a comprehensive service across the District. In addition, guides to Hate Crime and Domestic Violence will be introduced.

Lead Agency: Safer Communities EFDC. Parent Theme Group: Safer Communities

EPP15 Anti-Social Behaviour

A sum of £35k was awarded to update and enhance antiquated CCTV systems in the district. The project's progress is dependent on EFDC developing their Service Plan and Maintenance Programme to ensure work is prioritised correctly. However, as of 13th January 2010, two Digital Video Recorders at Oakwood Hill and Upshire have already been replaced. The Safer Communities Team have identified a need for CCTV coverage in Epping High Street and are now in the initial stages of investigating the possibility of delivering this project in conjunction with funding from Epping Forest Safer Communities Partnership from April 2011. A report will shortly be presented to the LSP to enable them to consider these options.

Lead Agency: Safer Communities EFDC. Parent Theme Group: Safer Communities

EPP 5 Volunteering

A sum of £49k was allocated to help set up a scheme to provide support to people with mental health issues to help them volunteer with selected local groups to aid their pathway into employment. The scheme has been running since August when the coordinator was appointed, links have been forged with Loughton and Epping Community Mental Health teams, both teams of 'Employability' and with voluntary organisations for volunteering opportunities. To date 34 referrals have been made; the Co-ordinator has met with 24volunteers, 12 supported interviews with voluntary organisations have taken place and there have been 9 supported placements. So far, 2 volunteers have been in placement for over 2 months and 3 other volunteers have been in placement for over a month. The number of referrals to date has far exceeded expectations. A volunteer has reported that she has been able to decrease her medication due to her increase in self confidence by volunteering. Another volunteer has said that his self confidence has grown due to the responsibilities he has undertaken while volunteering.

Lead Agency: VAEF. Parent Theme Group: Sustainable Communities

EPP8 Helping Vulnerable groups engage in the arts

Almost £40k was awarded to a local scheme which involved establishing a supported programme for people with learning difficulties in the district to enable them to access the arts through the Volunteer Centre. This scheme has now been running for a number of months and a wide range of activities have been organised. Eleven local people have attended 12 hours of art workshops at Theatre Resource in Ongar. The co-ordinator has arranged a trip to the Theatre on December 10th which 15 local people attended and a Christmas concert for the Choir was arranged on December 4th. A workshop has also been held to make Christmas tree decorations. All trips and workshops organised so far have been full and feedback has been very positive. The workshops at Theatre Resource have been completed and service users who attended responded positively saying they had learnt new skills. A second term has been arranged with Theatre Resource.

Lead Agency: VAEF. Parent Theme Group: Sustainable Communities

EPP14 Improving access to after school clubs to improve educational attainment

Just over £53k was allocated to a joint project of VAEF and ECC to help children from rural areas to access after school clubs in the district. A minibus has been put on to enable children to attend St Johns and a weekly service is being offered. The scheme is also actively looking to help parents/carers in isolated rural communities to access Children's Centre Services. A number of other related transport services are being considered to expand the service.

Lead Agency: VAEF. Parent Theme Group: Sustainable Communities

EPP10 Supporting early years intervention to drive up educational attainment

This project received £42k to pay for a parenting officer to support families with children under the age of 5 to provide access to parenting programmes through the Children's Centres. The PCT have been commissioned to deliver parenting skills opportunities for parents with a child under 5 and a range of parenting support activities and events to meet the needs of the client groups in the Epping Forest district.

Lead Agency: ECC/Essex CTB. Parent Theme Group: Children's Partnership

EPP9 Improving the emotional health and well being of children in the district

This project received £85k to establish a service providing emotional health and well being support for children with training for professionals to focus on prevention of mental health problems by building self-esteem and confidence. A number of key partners have now been commissioned to provide CAMHS support services, including: National Education Trust (LSA training in managing emotions amongst children aged 6 - 7), EFDC (Special Educational Needs trampolining) and Davenant school, through the Epping Forest School Sports Partnership (Multi-skills inclusion programme). One attendee has reported her approach to dealing with the emotional needs of young children in the classroom has certainly changed and she has gained a real benefit from her experiences with the 6's and 7's training. EFDC is supporting three schools to encourage children with special needs to attend trampolining sessions in Epping Sports Centre. Davenant School, through the School Sports Partnership, have begun assessments in after school clubs in Sir John Fisher and Theydon Bois. Children expressing particular interest or potential in a particular discipline are being sign-posted to local clubs.

Lead Agency: ECC/Essex CTB. Parent Theme Group: Children's partnership

EPP11 Supporting after school youth provision to tackle anti social behaviour

This project was awarded £125k to provide a new post which would support the delivery of weekend and evening after-school activities in areas of disadvantage to help divert young people away from anti-social behaviour. Young people would also receive counselling and support and be able to meet in an 'indoor space'. All commissioned services, listed below, are now being delivered.

- A multi-skills inclusion programme in partnership with Davenant School.
- After-school and young people support groups at The Bridge community youth project, Buckhurst Hill.
- Open access after school youth work being delivered by The Box, a young people's support service in Epping Town Centre. It has extended drop-in sessions between 16:00 - 18:00. A venue change is imminent to larger premises to expand support offering a greater emphasis to one-to-one support and counselling for young people.
- "We don't do bored", a programme offered by EFDC sports development team.
- Loughton Youth Project has employed 2 sessional youth workers to support the expansion of "The Space", a social meeting place for young people. The Space gives young people access to audio and video broadcasting, photography, website development as well as the cafe and social space.
- Relate have been commissioned to deliver 10 workshops per year supporting parents of young people at risk of entering the Youth Justice System. Delivery begins in January 2010.

A launch party took place in October 2009 in partnership with the police, TASCC, LYP, EFDC and Ignite. An online radio show has been introduced with currently 30+ young people attending. A very successful stakeholder's event was delivered on January 27th where over 30 local youth service providers and commissioners attended to see an introductory video produced by the young people being supported by the provision. The video was followed by a comment from one of the young people who used the service, he explained "He had a choice to make and Loughton Youth Project through "The Space" had helped him make the right and informed decision towards which path to take."

Lead agency ECC/ Essex CTB. Parent Theme Group: Children's Partnership.

Conclusion

The last year has been characterised by efforts to build the capacity of the partnership, in terms of resources and the range of partners engaged. In just over a year, a new team has come into post and begun work. While this has been ongoing, a focus on outcomes has also been developing and, as the previous paragraphs show, a number of key achievements are visible.

The results of the 'Aspire to Perform' review show local partners very positive about the LSP and its ability to deliver. This view was reinforced at the Board's Awayday in February.

The challenges of effectively engaging in 'Total Place' in a three tier environment, and leading on a coordinated response to declining public spending, may well define the medium term in relation to the development of the role of local partnerships generally. Future governments may well view partnerships as a key vehicle for removing 'duplication of transaction costs' and 'avoiding cost shunting' across public services in a time of reduced spending. A move from a partnership board to a Public Sector Board approach or the establishment of powerful 'Economic Prosperity Boards' may be things that the partnership will need to consider. This together with a more radical move to commissioning and merging/aligning mainstream budgets and providing a forum/structure for redesigning delivery of public services locally would change the nature of partnership working. Understanding how One Epping Forest can best respond is a key challenge if it is to ensure that it is leading and preparing effectively for new developments and helping influence change on behalf of local communities.

Appendix 1 – What we've done to challenge the credit crunch.

Feature in The Forester Magazine

The Team had been impressed by the article 'Cracking The Credit Crunch' appearing in the South Staffordshire LSP Newsletter, bringing together information and signposting on services provided by the various partner organisations. The article was used as the basis for a similar feature appearing in the Summer 2009 edition of the District Council's Forester magazine. That feature provided an 'easy to read' summary on support available and tips on helping individuals and businesses deal with the recession, including:

- Benefits entitlement
- CAB Services
- General Housekeeping Tips
- Environmental and Energy Efficiencies
- Support for Small Businesses and the Role of the Business Link and the Federation of Small Businesses
- Employment Opportunities and the Role of Job Centre Plus
- Essex Innovation Programmes
- Mortgage and Tenancy Advice

This initial article was then supplemented by a full special credit crunch edition of the Forester containing key information about support to businesses and local people.

Appointment of Business Champion

The Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce put forward a recommendation to the District Council that it should appoint a 'Business Champion' for 2009/10 and raised this issue at a Credit Crunch Task and Finish team meeting. The Champion could act as an advocate for local businesses in this difficult economic time and provide a central point of senior contact with the District Council and its partners. In concurring with this recommendation, the Council, at its meeting on 30 June 2009 agreed the appointment of Councillor Chris Whitbread as the Chamber's Business Champion.

Business Support Open Day – Loughton Cricket Club, 3 July 2009

The Team gave its support to the Business Support Open Day, part of the Howzat Cricket Festival, held at Loughton Cricket Club on 3 July 2009. Led by Business Link this event involved all LSP partners concerned with business and others. It took a market-place format, with a large number of partners holding their own stalls and provided excellent networking opportunities. It was agreed to hold an additional business event in the autumn in partnership with the FSB and others and with support from the LSP.

Involvement of Multi-Faith Forum.

The issue of potential additional premises to respond to increased need for advisory and other community organisations such as the CAB was referred to the Multi-Faith Forum for discussion and an assessment of the options available.

Small Business Engagement Accord

Members of the Task and Finish Team following discussions again raised the opportunity for the District Council to sign up to Small Business Engagement Accord to enhance the potential for better partnership working at this difficult economic time. The Accord is a voluntary code of practice for local authorities in the East of England seeking to encourage more productive dialogue with local businesses. The Accord brings together various aspects of consultation best practice, as well as specific

ideas from the Federation of Small Businesses designed to improve the level of participation by businesses in local democracy. The District Council will now become a signatory to the accord.

EERA Skills and Worklessness Seminar Epping 5 May 2009

The LSP sponsored and supported a workshop provided by the East of England Regional Assembly to identify the full range of support at a national, regional and local level. The aim of the workshop, one of a series throughout the region, was to bring together local representatives from the business, voluntary and community sectors in Essex, together with funding agencies, to raise awareness of the packages of support available to enhance skills and tackle worklessness. The seminar looked at what is being delivered locally and at a regional level, with presentations from EEDA, Jobcentre Plus, Train to Gain and EERA. It also gave local groups the opportunity to make these government agencies aware of their concerns about access to grants and better coordination and publicity.

Business Start-Up Advice

The Team gave its support to a proposal for Business Link and EFDC to work on a programme of activity to encourage an increased awareness and uptake of business start-up advice by individuals within the district. In summary, this programme will bring together Business Link's business support expertise with EFDC's local knowledge and contacts at minimal cost to increase activity, including one-to-one business start-up surgeries, the hosting of additional 'start your own business' workshop sessions and increased marketing activity.

Appendix 2 – What we are going to do to challenge the credit crunch

EPPING FOREST LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP - TASK AND FINISH TEAM RE 'CREDIT CRUNCH' IMPLEMENTATION OF FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS ARISING FROM FINAL REPORT (SET OUT IN PRIORITY ORDER)

PRIORITY NO.	DESCRIPTION	CURRENT SITUATION	FUTURE ACTION
1	Prepare Business Plan for the growth of 'Credit Unions' in the District.	Information on operation of credit unions has been obtained.	Sustainable Communities Theme Group to identify elements to be contained in Business Plan.
2	Partners to engage in and support programmes designed to maximise access to Future Jobs Support in the District.	Partners are aware of the fund and its potential for job creation, particularly for Younger People.	Bid approved. Placements began January 2010.
3	Keep Under Review the Impact of the Recession on Advice-Giving Services (e.g. CAB) and look at ways of Meeting Enhanced Need.	EFDC provides a grant to the CAB as part of a Service Level Agreement.	The Impact of the Recession on the CAB will be assessed as part of the review of funding to the CAB in readiness for a new SLA commencing 2010/11. sustainable Communities Group to receive update on position and future challenges.
4	(Through the Sustainable Communities Group) look for opportunities to support volunteering.	Some of the partners currently provide for volunteering within their services e.g. EFDC Country-Care.	Carry out review of existing opportunities for volunteering in partner organisations then look to enhance those opportunities and extend to other areas.
5	Support and Identify Opportunities For External Funding and Identify and Build on Examples of Good Practice.	Some of the partner organisations (e.g. VAEF, EFDC) already have individuals with this as a specific	Representatives from partner organisations who have this responsibility as part of their remit should meet to identify means of co-ordinating and enhancing the existing arrangements.

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PRIORITY NO.	DESCRIPTION	CURRENT SITUATION	FUTURE ACTION
		responsibility in their role.	
6	Identify Opportunities for Developing the Role of Business Champion.	Specific roles have already been identified as part of the Small Business Engagement Accord.	FSB and District Council representatives to meet to identify opportunities for developing the role.
7	(Through the Sustainable Communities Group) consider the Scope For Future Events and Identify Opportunities For Joining Up Existing Support in the District.	Some Support Mechanisms are already in place.	Hold discussions at meeting of Sustainable Communities Theme Group regarding Scope for Future Events and Enhancing Existing Support in the District.
8	(Through the Sustainable Communities Group) enhance the Forum for Engagement with Partners and Identify Key Strategic Objectives to Support On-going Work in this area.	There is already a degree of engagement between partners.	Hold discussions at meeting of Sustainable Communities Theme Group regarding potential for enhancing the arrangements for engagement between partner organisations.
9	Draw up Plans for a new Economic Development Strategy.	Elements of the Strategy already exist.	EFDC Economic Development Officer to identify elements and prepare a plan to bring them together, for forwarding to partner organisations for discussion. Discuss process and outcomes required from Strategy. Undertake an employers' survey in line with Uttlesford's survey carried out recently.