

EPHING FOREST LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Sustainable Communities Theme Group Meeting

Date: 18th September 2009

Time: 14:00 – 16:00



MINUTES

Present

Chair Cllr Anne Grigg (AG)	Epping Forest District Council Vice-Chair
Alan Hall (AH)	Director of Housing EFDC
John Houston (JH)	EF LSP Manager
Claire Martin (CM)	Policy officer, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
Jacqui Foile (JF)	Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Epping Forest
Cllr Mary Sartin (MS)	Environment Portfolio holder, EFDC
Nick Roberts (NR)	Passenger Transport Co-ordination Centre Manager, ECC
Barbara Stock (BS)	EF Lifelong Learning Partnership Coordinator, EFC
Kassandra Polyzoides (KP)	Epping Forest District Council
Amanda Wintle (AW)	Epping Forest District Council
John de Wilton Preston (JP)	Director of Planning & Economic Development, EFDC
John James (JJ)	Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce
Chris Overend (CO)	Policy and Research Officer, EFDC
Keith Brown	Essex Regional Organiser, Federation of Small Businesses

Apologies

Keith Hughes Business Link Essex

Minutes

David Wright (DW) LSP Admin Support

1. Welcome and purpose of meeting

- 1.1. AG welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Sustainable Communities Theme Group (SC TG) and outlined the purpose of the meeting: to agree the TOR and identify themes to champion. She added that the role of the group was to release the potential of new ideas and while it should take a strategic long term view it was necessary to also look for short term wins.
- 1.2. AG proposed MS for vice-chair which was seconded and **agreed** by members.

2. Draft terms of reference (TOR) for amendment/agreement.

- 2.1. JP led the discussion on the TOR which had been formulated at the SC TG scoping meeting of 24/8 and presented to the Steering Group on 27/8. The following changes were agreed:
 - Overall Aim (1). Replace 'To encourage ...' by 'To work with...'
 - Specific terms of reference (5). Replace '...contribute towards ensuring...' by '...help ensure...'
 - Specific terms of reference (9). Replace '...Performance Reward Grant expenditure.' by '... Performance Reward Grant funded projects.'
 - Membership. Remove '(TBC)' after 'Cllr Mary Sartin Vice Chair.'
 - Membership. Replace 'David Anstey/Stephen Wilkinson' by 'Claire Martin'.
 - Membership. Replace 'Rep from Lifelong learning Action Group' by 'Barbara Stock, Lifelong Learning Partnership Coordinator, Epping Forest College'.

- Membership. Add 'Jacqui Foile Chief Officer Voluntary Action Epping Forest'.
- 2.2. KP was concerned that some of the wording was too subjective e.g. decent and attractive housing. However, it was stated that the specific tasks derived from these TORs would have more specific targets.
 - 2.3. AH wondered if the PCT should be represented. The response was that the group was already large and that expertise could always be invited along for specific tasks.

3. Credit crunch report and its recommendations for work by the Theme Group.

- 3.1. JP introduced the *Meeting the Challenge of the Credit Crunch* report of the Task and Finish team. The report, he said, would be presented to the LSP Board on 24/9 with a view to getting the recommendations endorsed, many of which would mean further work for this group. JP then spoke on some of the individual recommendations, which he added would not involve all the members of the group and some may require expertise from outside of the group.
 - 3.2. For recommendation 2, Future Jobs Fund, further information was added regarding the background and status of the bid. The terms of the funding were that it needed to be for more than 30 positions of at least 25 hrs per week for a minimum of 6 months aimed at long term unemployed 18-24 year olds. It was on this basis that the West Essex partnership decided to submit a joint bid which has since grown with other partners joining in. A preliminary bid is going in next week with a formal bid being submitted the following week for 65 posts, 125 placements, to a value of £800k.
 - 3.3. Recommendation 3, Signposting, if endorsed, could be looking at holding an annual business event with the District Council and other agencies to bring together the latest information and support.
 - 3.4. For recommendation 4, support to the CAB, JP reminded everyone that this was not just about financial support. This was illustrated by the work being done to find accommodation e.g. through the multi-faith forum.
 - 3.5. JF spoke of the problems of capacity of VAEF that increasing volunteering would bring (recommendation 5) i.e. trying to deal with more volunteers with an already stretched support staff.
 - 3.6. Nick Roberts asked, what has been the impact of the Bank of Essex? JJ replied that it had no impact in this area. An invitation had been extended to a representative from ECC but he had been unable to attend. KB added that 20 loans had been made to date but none in Epping Forest. He also said that Bank of Essex literature would be available for the 'Beat the Recession' event on 22/10 in Theydon Bois. **NR said that he would make further inquiries and feed the results back to the group.**
- Action 01 NR**
- 3.7. JP concluded by saying that the Task and Finish team had looked for gaps in the available support and these had been listed as recommendations in section 8 of the report which provided a meaty work plan on economic prosperity. He asked for members' views on what they thought the priorities should be. JF thought that drawing in external funding would be essential and that VAEF could help in this area but would need to bring in resource. JH added that we should be looking at efficiencies derived from economies of scale. JJ's view was that debt was a major problem and that support of the CAB and Credit Unions were where the effort should go. In particular, finding Cab accommodation in areas where it was most needed such as Limes farm and Ninefields. He also added that while the introduction of a business champion was

very successful, he would like to see an enterprise centre established. JP asked that any further **comments on the report be fed back.** **Action 02 All**

4. Further Work Programme.

4.1. It was stated that while the credit crunch report contained a heavy work load plan, there were other areas that the group should be addressing. Namely, housing, access to services such as public transport and environmental issues, for example, carbon emissions. AH suggested that plans from the former Action groups could be revisited for ideas. JH proposed that mini issues and options papers be put together for each of the four areas identified in reference 5 of the TOR paper and that this could feed into the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) drafting group. AH reminded everyone of the problems encountered previously when trying to formulate the SCS and the Local development Framework (LDF). AW responded by saying that the issue had been one of timing but that there was now a common consultation process that will allow the interlinking of the SCS with the Core Strategy and the LDF. AH requested that a presentation be given on the LDF at the next meeting. AW replied that the LDF work was still at an early stage but she **would report on progress at the next meeting.**

Action 03 AW

4.2. The **production of the four mini issues and options papers**, which will only be used internally and so don't need to be polished, needs to be done by 9/10. A **draft template of the SCS will be given to the leads** on the four sections as assigned below:

Action 04 JH

- AH will revisit the housing paper and refresh as necessary for reference 5a. **Action 05 AH**
- NR will look at the transport issues for reference 5b. **Action 06 NR**
- VW will pick up reference 5c with CO looking at the rural aspects. **Action 07 VW/CO**
- AW and KP will look at reference 5d. **Action 08 AW/KP**
- JF will feed into all four mini reports. **Action 09 JF**

4.3. To help with the production of the mini issues and options papers, the district and ward data profiles being produced by EFDC planning will be distributed. **Action 10 JP**

4.4. It was requested that the contact details of the leads be added to the minutes.

Name	Email	Telephone
Jacqui Foile	Jfoile@vaef.org.uk	01992 564424
Alan Hall	AHALL@eppingforestdc.gov.uk	01992 564004
John Houston	Jhouston@eppingforestdc.gov.uk	01992 564094
Chris Overend	COVEREND@eppingforestdc.gov.uk	01992 564247
Kassandra Polyzoides	Kpolyzoides@eppingforestdc.gov.uk	01992 564119
Nick Roberts	Nick.Roberts@essex.gov.uk	01245 437187
Vicki Willis	Vwillis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk	01992 564593
Amanda Wintle	Awintle@eppingforestdc.gov.uk	01992 564543

4.5. JP gave a brief account of an issue arising from the Regional Spatial Strategy which is part of the East of England Regional Plan. The plan has been extended to 2031 and it paints 4 growth scenarios for the period. Which, in brief, are:

- 1) Roll forward the 2021 plan

- 2) Focus on Housing
- 3) Focus on employment
- 4) Focus on housing need (contains much more development).

JP said that EFDC is already looking at their contribution to the consultation which ends on 24/11 but he thought **that the LSP should also be responding**. JH said that he would do this. JP added that care needs to be taken when looking at the housing expansion options as some of the figures for the district are hidden in the Harlow expansion.

Action 11 JH

5. AOB

- 5.1. AH brought members' attention to the Zimbabwe resettlement programme which would be mainly older people and is likely therefore to impact on a number of services.
- 5.2. NR offered to bring in other ECC representation if it was needed.

6. Dates of Future Meetings

- 6.1. It was agreed to meet every 2 months initially. The following dates and times were agreed.

Friday 20th November 2:30 am – 4:30 pm
Friday 22nd January 2:30 am – 4:30 pm