

EPPING FOREST LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Sustainable Communities Theme Group Meeting

Date: 21st May 2010

Time: 14:00 – 16:30

MINUTES

Present

Cllr Mary Sartin (MS)	Vice Chair	Environment Portfolio holder, EFDC
Keith Brown (KB)		Essex Regional Organiser, Federation of Small Businesses
Sarah Creitzman (SC)		Environmental Co-ordinator
Jacqui Foile (JF)		Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Epping Forest
Alan Hall (AH)		Director of Housing EFDC
John Houston (JH)		EF LSP Manager
Keith Hughes (KH)		East Of England IDB
Claire Martin (CM)		Policy officer, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
Pauline Nischal (PN)		Jobcentreplus
Jim Nolan (JN)		Assistant Director, Environment & Streetscene
Chris Overend (CO)		Policy and Research Officer, EFDC
Kassandra Polyzoides (KP)		Asst Director of Planning, EFDC
Nick Roberts (NR)		Passenger Transport Co-ordination Centre Manager, ECC
Barbara Stock (BS)		EF Lifelong Learning Partnership Coordinator, EFC
Gill Wallis (GW)		Council Community Development, EFDC
Vicki Willis (VW)		Economic Development Officer, EFDC

Guests

Bob Palmer (BP)	Director of Finance, EFDC
Felicity Hall (FH)	Arts Officer, EFDC

Apologies

Cllr Anne Grigg	Epping Forest District Council Vice-Chair
John de Wilton Preston	Director of Planning & Economic Development, EFDC

Minutes

Colin Rowell (CR)	LSP Admin Support
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Cllr Mary Sartin chaired the meeting

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.

2. Minutes of last meeting / matters arising

2.1 Minutes of the last meeting (19/03) were agreed without amendment.

2.2 Item 4.8 – Business Champion. KB is pursuing this.

2.3 Item 6.3 – EPP14. After discussion it was agreed that oversight of this project be transferred to the Epping Forest Children's Partnership.

3. Meeting the Carbon Challenge

- 3.1 SC gave a presentation on Meeting the Carbon Challenge. There was a general discussion after the presentation. The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) is working with local organisations. Attendance at FSB events is down by 40 – 60%. It was felt that grant availability on this issue needs to be promoted to encourage organisations to attend events.
- 3.2 A number of energy saving measures are being installed in EFDC offices, e.g. hippo bags in toilets, smart electricity meters. A question was raised about whether Homefield House is being included. This will be confirmed.
- 3.3 KH asked whether local organisations are being contacted to publicise this initiative. They would benefit if they could show a return on any changes made.
- 3.4 Lee Valley Park Authority are running a land management project in conjunction with Defra to look at how land is being used. A report on the findings will soon be produced.
- 3.5 JH noted that One Epping Forest is a value adding organisation. Your Voice Matters identified key local priorities – the environment was high on the list. It was recommended that a partner (environmental) charter, that partners could sign up to, and best practice kit be created. **This was agreed. A subgroup is to be formed to work with SC on this. Subgroup members were agreed as Patrick Arnold, Keith Brown and Claire Martin.**
A draft Charter and tool kit will be brought to the next meeting.

4. LDF Update

- 4.1 Evidence based reports are currently being produced for presentation to Cabinet during May, June and July. If the reports are approved, consultation will continue. It was noted that the new Government may announce changes which could impact this process. **It was agreed that EFDC will circulate information on government changes as and when they emerged. Action : KP**

5. Future Jobs Fund Project

- 5.1 The project gives 6 monthly job placements to 18 – 24 year olds who have been unemployed for 6 months.
- 5.2 JH gave an update on the current status of the project. There are almost 80 young people in work placements in various organisations across West Essex, including Epping Forest College, Gunpowder Mills, VAEF and EFDC. The proportion of unemployed 18 – 24 year olds in Epping district is higher than Harlow or Uttlesford. A second phase of the project is planned for 95 more young people, with the PCT offering most of the additional opportunities. The Dept. of Work and Pensions had offered to double the scheme. JH asked the group to let him know if they know on any employers that would take part in the scheme. NVQ2 training will be provided for all candidates. The posts that are offered must be with not for profit organisations or offer roles that are of community benefit and not replacing existing staff.
- 5.3 It was agreed that the calibre of candidates coming forward was excellent. The West Essex Partnership was commended for the quality and range of placements it offers. The local FJF has been shortlisted for a Jobcentre Plus award.

6. Report from the Engagement Review

- 6.1 GW gave an update on the background to the report. Five free days consultancy was offered by the Regional Empowerment Partnership to develop NI 4 (people feeling able to influence decisions in their local area). This was accepted and the study was carried out. There was good 'buy in' from partners and stakeholders. The report recommendations have been presented to the Limes Farm Community Association and received favourably. The findings (from Limes Farm) will be rolled out across the district. The new community hall fits in perfectly with the recommendations and will have a flexible design allowing multi agency use.

The report recognised the good work of the Community Development team. It was noted that there has been good feedback to Jobcentre Plus about using the new community facility as a service 'hub' with lots of agencies operating out of it. It was felt that developments like this in the community greatly reduce the fear some people have of going to unfamiliar offices.
The hall is scheduled for completion in 12 months.

7. EEDA Economic Briefing

- 7.1 VW outlined the context of the London Arc East report, namely to provide local intelligence data and economic evidence to EEDA.
- 7.2 VW is looking to develop an advocacy plan.
- 7.3 There was discussion about the future of regional agencies. It was agreed that the future of such agencies is unknown, but that some may be retained under another name.

8. Developing the M11 Economic Partnership

- 8.1 The formation of a West Essex Economic Partnership (WEED) was originally suggested 3 years ago, but was not pursued. The LSP wanted to ensure a strong voice for the area with government funding agencies to ensure Epping Forest does not lose out. Emerging partnerships have been discussed, resulting in the proposed M11 Economic Partnership. Draft terms of reference and a work programme have been drawn up. The LSP is very supportive of this initiative.
- 8.2 KB noted that time is of the essence in terms of engaging with the new government, the next 50 days are key in influencing the development of the M11 group. Any decisions made now will be in place for the next 5 years.
- 8.3 VW stated that the County has commissioned a series of local profiles to assess the state of the economy county wide. **VW will be contacting partners for information they may have.** It was agreed that the SC Theme Group should play a key role in the new M11 Corridor Partnership. **Action : VW**

9. Transport Task & Finish Progress

- 9.1 NR gave an update from the Transport Task & Finish group.
The first meeting was held on 18 May. Numbers was lower than hoped, but those that did attend were of a high calibre. Cllr Chris Pond is the group chairman. Councillors were keen to drive the project forward and are looking for a wider attendance.
- 9.2 The terms of reference were agreed at the first meeting.
- 9.3 The group will be inviting local providers to present their service offerings to the group. **Action : NR**
- 9.4 There is no PCT representative on the group, this is being addressed. **Action : NR**
- 9.5 The carbon footprint was mentioned in the meeting. SC suggested she might have an input to the group. **This was agreed.** **Action : NR**
- 9.6 Transport surveys have been distributed across the district. NR agreed to circulate the survey and terms of reference to the Sustainable Communities Group. **Action : NR**
- 9.7 Transport T&F meetings will be bi-monthly into 2011.
- 9.8 The next meeting will look at the provision and quality of taxi services in the district, with the local licensing officer being invited to the meeting. **Action : NR**
- 9.9 GW suggested that the Youth Council be invited on to the group. NR will contact Diane Butler to discuss this. **Action : NR**
- 9.10 There was a general discussion about the Total Place approach and that management of joined up transport services would contribute to the proposal.

- 9.11 BP noted that the procurement agency for Essex is looking at cross county spend, which will include transport. NR will make contact with group to establish the impact on the Transport T&F group.

Action : NR

10. SCS Update

- 10.1 JH gave an update on the progress of the SCS refresh. The SCS has been refined down over the last 6 months to focus on the 10 key partnership objectives of the district. The group was asked to review the content of the SCS and provide any initial feedback for the Steering Group meeting on 27 May. A relevant extract of the draft SCS was available to attendees. It was felt that it be beneficial to review the draft SCS as a whole document. It was agreed that the full version be circulated to the group via email.

Action : CR

- 10.2 AH asked for clarification of the process to publication. Once the draft has been approved by the Steering Group, it will be sent electronically to key stakeholders for their feedback. Once this is complete, final signoff will be sought from the Board.
- 10.3 The detailed SCS delivery action plan will be worked up once the content has been signed off.

11. LABGI Funding

- 11.1 BP gave an overview of the LABGI funding scheme as per the circulated paper. This may be the last grant received under the LABGI scheme. BP asked for suggestions for schemes that would benefit from a grant.

KB gave four examples.

- 'M11 corridor showcase'. This is running at the business enterprise meeting in Nov 2010. The estimated grant for this scheme is £3k - £4k.
- 'Shop at my local'. This is a scheme being run by Anglia Ruskin University in Rochford. It delivers training to local retailers on techniques for improving their store. There is also a web based customer loyalty scheme. The estimated grant required is not known.
- Ringo text based car park payments was suggested. This scheme is already in place at EFDC.
- Improved Broadband access. HMRC requires business to submit returns via the internet. This is a problem where broadband is either intermittent or non existent. Maldon LSP, Maldon Council and ECC have launched a rural wireless broadband project. In 10 days, 200 businesses have registered. The startup cost for the project was £33k. The breakdown of this cost is not known.
Each business is charged a one off cost for a receiver and a monthly rental charge.
Philip Wilson Smith is the ECC contact for the project. BP will contact Philip Wilson Smith and draw up a report for submission to cabinet.

Action : BP

- 11.2 KH supported these initiatives. KH also gave a brief overview of the business startup voucher scheme. This provides free vouchers to be spent with a recognised business startup consultant. The scheme does not provide ideas for startups but gives advice and guidance on how to start a business.

- 11.3 The Business Survey report has just been received. VW will give a presentation on the results of the survey at the next meeting. **Action : VW**
- 11.4 KB asked what the timescale was for submitting requests to Cabinet. The next Cabinet meeting is on 7 June. The report on LABGI funding requests will go to the meeting following 7 June.
- 11.5 It was agreed that all relevant supporting information for these grant requests should be passed to VW or BP as soon as possible.

12. Funding Alert

- 12.1 CO referred to the paper circulated and asked for any comments.
- 12.2 VW asked whether the Life Raft Trust information had been passed to CO. He has received it.
- 12.3 CO asked whether the information provided in the report was considered useful. It was agreed that it was given that opportunities for funding are likely to be reduced significantly in the future and new sources of funding should be identified as soon as possible.

13. Credit Crunch Action Plan: Credit Unions, Volunteer Charter, Business Charter

- 13.1 A letter has been written to Harlow and Essex Savers credit unions asking if they would like to deliver their services in the Epping Forest district. Progress will be reported at the next meeting.
- 13.2 CO referred to the circulated draft of the Volunteer Charter for comment. JH, CO and JF are working together to finalise a document that partners will sign up to. **Action : JF / JH / CO**
- 13.3 KH suggested that consideration be given to the Olympics as this will provide a significant opportunity for volunteering.
- 13.4 It was agreed that the members of the group should review the Volunteer and Business Charters and feedback to CO by end June, with the intention of finalising the documents at the next meeting. A final draft, following initial discussions with large providers, should be brought to the next meeting for approval.

14. AOB

- 14.1 JH gave an update on the West Essex Primary Prize, a schools scheme which aims to reward the efforts of our pupils right across the west Essex area, acknowledge the excellent work taking place in our primary schools and help raise aspiration among all our children.
There will be prize giving events in Epping, Harlow and Uttlesford and prize giving assemblies at all participating schools.
- 14.2 KH informed the group that there is an event in 1 week at ECC to look at shared procurement processes across Essex, Herts and 1 other authority.
- 14.3 VW noted that the next business event will be on June 10. Details to be published in the members bulletin.

Date of next meeting

23 July 2010 at 2:00pm – Committee Room, EFDC Offices