

EPPING FOREST LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Sustainable Communities Theme Group Meeting

Date: 23rd July 2010

Time: 14:00 – 16:00

MINUTES

Present

Cllr Anne Grigg (AG) Chairman	Epping Forest District Council
Keith Brown (KB)	Essex Regional Organiser, Federation of Small Businesses
Sarah Creitzman (SC)	Environmental Co-ordinator
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
John de Wilton Preston	Director of Planning & Economic Development, EFDC
Barbara Stock (BS)	EF Lifelong Learning Partnership Coordinator, EFC
Gill Wallis (GW)	Council Community Development, EFDC
Vicki Willis (VW)	Economic Development Officer, EFDC

Guests

Apologies

Cllr Mary Sartin (MS) Vice Chair	Environment Portfolio holder, EFDC
Jacqui Foile (JF)	Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Epping Forest
Alan Hall (AH)	Director of Housing EFDC
Felicity Hall (FH)	Arts Officer, EFDC
Kassandra Polyzoides (KP)	Asst Director of Planning, EFDC
Nick Roberts (NR)	Passenger Transport Co-ordination Centre Manager, ECC

Minutes

Colin Rowell (CR)	LSP Admin Support
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1. Welcome and apologies

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

2. Minutes of last meeting / matters arising

- 2.1 Item 2.3 – ownership of the project under EPP14 has now been transferred to Epping Forest Children’s Partnership.
- 2.2 Item 3.1 - ‘Attendance at FSB events is down by 40 – 60%.’ should read ‘Attendance at FSB events linked to carbon/green issues is down by 40 – 60% compared to other events’.
- 2.3 Item 5.3 – the EF Future Jobs Fund was awarded runner up in the Major Employer Category at the Eastern Region Job Centre Plus awards.

- 2.4 Item 14 – the WEP Prize Giving hosted by Epping Forest College was a great success. 14 schools in the district took part and 170 parents and children attended.
- 2.5 Item 7.1 should read - VW outlined the context of the London Arc East work, namely to provide local intelligence data and economic evidence to EEDA'.
- 2.6 Item 7.2 should read - A further thread is the production of a West Essex Advocacy Plan identifying strategic priorities'.
- 2.7 Item 8.3 should read - VW referred to the Economic Assessment and stated that the County has commissioned a series of local profiles to assess the state of the economy county wide. Districts are required to produce 'mini' Local Economic Assessments for submission to Essex County Council. **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

3. Business Survey Results

- 3.1 VW gave a presentation on the results of the Business Survey. The presentation will be circulated with the meeting minutes, the report will be added to the One Epping Forest Mini Observatory when approved for public circulation.
- 3.2 It was noted that Broadband availability and Car Parking were identified as factors important to businesses. KB noted that the large number of small and start up businesses in the district will not benefit from the £50,000 National Insurance holiday. **KB proposed writing to the local MP expressing concerns. This was agreed. KB will draft a letter and forward to JH.**

Action : CR

Action : KB

- 3.3 JH noted that the draft Community Strategy includes a recommendation to develop broadband. Cllr Wagland is chairing a T&F group that will be looking at the provision of broadband to local businesses. It was noted that there are grants available for broadband development.
- 3.4 KH asked that any data that highlighted areas where local businesses needed support be provided to him where possible.
- 3.5 Data highlighting the difficulty in recruiting admin and secretarial skills were questioned. VW will review the underlying data to confirm accuracy.

Action : VW

- 3.6 JH noted that the data were interesting and could help to shape the implementation of the Community Strategy. He asked how the district will be represented on the Local Economic Partnership (LEP). This is unclear at present, although the LEP may be quite large with Essex talking to Kent about forming a LEP. KH will feedback from discussions with local businesses on the LEP project.

Action : KH

4. Update on Credit Union discussions

- 4.1 CO gave an update on the meetings with Harlowsave and Essex Savers.
- 4.2 Essex Savers is in a position to develop its services, but was unable to gauge the potential need for them until such time as it had the opportunity to publicise its services to the more rural and 'harder to reach' individuals in need in the District . It had received £55,000 from Essex County Council and was expecting a further £15,000 next year.
- 4.3 Harlowsave has been in existence for a longer period and could move into the District fairly quickly. Both credit unions concerned were in a position to offer a deduction through payroll facility to staff of partner organisations. **After further discussion it was agreed that both credit unions be invited to give a presentation at the next meeting of the group.**
- 4.4 **It was also agreed that JH and CO will contact partner organisations to see how they might offer credit union membership by deducting savings at source.**

Action : JH / CO

- 5. Update on progress of Transport T&F Group**
- 5.1 NR was unable to attend the meeting but did send an update on his actions from the last meeting. **The update will be circulated with the minutes.**
Action : CR
- 6. LSP Board Update**
- 6.1 JH noted that the key themes from 'The Coalition: Our Programme for Government' affecting LSPs were reviewed at the Board meeting.
- 6.2 The Community Strategy has been sent out for final consultation. The group were reminded that the closing date for feedback is 2 August 2010.
- 6.3 JH gave an update on the current PRG status. ECC are reviewing the position and will notify the LSP on 2 August about the new funding situation. An emergency Board meeting will be held to discuss the outcome. It was noted that PRG funded projects are already being stopped.
- 6.4 It was pointed out that 'Domestic violence has been targeted due to the World Cup. Posters have been put up in men's toilets highlighting the problem.' under item 5.2 of the Board minutes should read 'Domestic violence has been targeted due to the World Cup. Posters have been put up in men's and women's toilets highlighting the problem.'
- 6.5 GW asked if there was anything in the Community Strategy relating the 'Big Society'. There is, but perhaps not enough. GW will suggest additional material that could be included.
Action : GW
There is a whole section covering Partners managing resources together and how this should develop. GW noted that a key factor in this is Community Engagement. GW sits on the Essex T&F panel for Community Engagement Framework.
- 7. Update on Graduate Step Programme 2010**
- 7.1 JP has been involved with the programme for 10 years and gave an update on the programme to the group. It enables companies to take on graduate skills to develop a particular aspect of their business, e.g. website, which might otherwise not have been developed.
A number of FSB members have found the scheme very useful.
- 8. Update on Environmental Charter**
- 8.1 Setting up of the T&F subgroup has been delayed, the first meeting is during week commencing 26 July. SC has created a starter pack for the group providing information on best practice from other organisations. **This will be circulated to the group.**
Action : SC
- 9. Update on Business Charter and Volunteer Charter**
- 9.1 CO has had no feedback on the draft Business Charter. After discussion it was agreed that CO and KB would update the draft according to comments made in the meeting.
Action : CO / KB
- 9.2 It was agreed that once this was complete, the document would be circulated to partner organisations via the LSP Board for agreement. **Action : CO / Admin**
- 9.3 With regard to the draft Volunteer Charter, it was noted that some organisations may find it difficult to give all employees 2 days paid leave annually to volunteer. After discussion it was agreed that the draft be reviewed by all members of the group, with any comments submitted back to JH/CO. **Action : All**
It would then be presented to LSP Board organisations for possible sign up to a 1 year pilot. Discussions will be held with a few key partners in the interim to see if they would sign up in the first tranche. **Action : JH**
- 9.4 JH asked if anyone knew of local businesses already working with a Volunteer Charter and could there be a public / private approach? **KB will investigate this.**
Action : KB
- 10. Economic Assessment**

- 10.1 VW reviewed the circulated paper, which is a work in progress. The statutory duty to produce the assessment may disappear, but it will continue to be a useful project to provide input to other exercises.
- 10.2 KH noted that data for NI 171 (New Business Registration Rate) has been refreshed (with 2008 data). EF is top of the region.
JH asked that KH produce a press release to highlight this success. **KH and KB agreed to liaise on this.** **Action : KH / KB**
- 11. M11 Economic Partnership update / Local Enterprise Partnerships**
- 11.1 The last M11 partnership meeting reflected that emerging ideas are Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs). The latest available information indicates that there will be 4 LEPs and 2 Gateways. It may be that emerging organisations are structured around functional economic areas. Discussions are underway but no final decisions have been made.
- 11.2 JH expressed concerns over the development of LEPs, they need to be small enough to be local but big enough to deliver. There were concerns about local influence on LEP development to avoid the district being excluded. It is currently proposed that 2 pilot LEPs are set up.
- 11.3 JH asked whether the WEP could be a pilot area. It was agreed that this was possible but that ECC would need to be consulted. Any proposal for a pilot LEP would have to be submitted by 6 Sep 2010. It was noted that an authority can be in more than 1 LEP.
It was agreed that JH will carry out an investigation to look at potential partners across West Essex. KB will support JH with this.
Action : JH / KB
- 11.4 LEPs are chaired by representatives of the private sector.
KB is attending a meeting on 26 July, he will feedback any relevant information to JH.
Action : KB
- 11.5 It was noted that Growth Hubs are being proposed. Their organisation is as yet unknown.
- 12. Local Development Framework Update**
- 12.1 JP gave an update on the LDF. Regional strategies are being revoked, currently there is nothing to replace it.
- 12.2 The East of England Plan no longer exists although the collected evidence is still available.
- 12.3 Regional targets for Gypsies & Travellers no longer exist. Numbers are now to be decided locally. This is being processed by EFDC, with a report due to be presented to full council for acceptance.
- 12.4 LDFs will survive in some form. There will be more of a bottom up approach with emphasis on local community engagement and protection of green belt. It is unclear how the revocation of Regional strategies will impact on the growth of Harlow.
- 12.5 Village trusts will be set up to monitor local building issues.
- 12.6 The Infrastructure Services Commission will continue to operate but will be brought into the Planning Inspectorate.
- 13. Future Jobs Fund Update**
- 13.1 JH asked when details of the FJF replacement will be available. The programme will be running by this time next year, no further details are available. **PN agreed to keep the LSP in the loop as the situation develops. PN will provide JH with a contact for the new fund.** **Action : PN**
- 13.2 JP noted that 2 people on the FJF programme, in the Countrycare Team and one person in Community Arts have had their contracts extended.
- 14. Funding Alert**
- 14.1 CO referred to the paper circulated. As noted previously funding is available for broadband development. VW will circulate details of the fund to the group.
Action : VW
- 14.2 KB will also provide details on the Maldon project.

Action : KB

- 14.3 If a bid is to be submitted KB will provide assistance given his knowledge of the Maldon project.
- 14.4 KB would then assist the LSP in writing the bid.
- 14.5 KH noted that a broadband project can be implemented in 2 ways, 'build and they will come' or 'demand aggregation'. The first option is the quickest way of getting the project up and running.
- 15. **Open Forum / AOB**
- 15.1 CM noted that funding has been allocated to extend the National Cycling Route in the district.
- 15.2 The LABGI report went to cabinet recently. Funding for 2 years to support a Tourist information office in Waltham Abbey was approved.
- 15.3 Parking charges have been frozen for a further period.
- 15.4 It was noted that the LABGI scheme no longer exists, a replacement scheme is on the horizon.

Date of next meeting

24 September 2010 at 2:00pm – Committee Room, EFDC Offices