

News from Cllr Diana Collins
Chairman of One Epping Forest

Dear Colleagues

One Epping Forest continues to deliver for local communities in increasingly difficult times.

The Future Jobs Fund locally remains a very successful initiative. Our scheme was recently picked as runner up in the best large employer category for youth employment at the Eastern Region Jobcentre Plus awards.. Many of our first batch of 79 employees have now completed their placements, with over 25 individual employers across West Essex. I'm pleased to say that a number of them have managed to remain in employment after their period on the scheme. The second batch of 95 young, long term unemployed people from our area have just begun their placements. The feedback we receive from both employers and employees is very positive and the young people concerned are making a major contribution to their hosting organisations.

We have just completed a very successful pilot project called the West Essex Primary Prize which involved some 30 schools, covering over 6,000 pupils across West Essex. Fourteen local schools joined with the partnership to honour the achievements of some of the youngest children in our district. They had recorded the greatest improvement in key subjects such as maths and english as well as some other special areas selected by their schools as being very important. Over 150 children, parents and head teachers joined with the Council Chairman at Epping Forest College to honour their achievements. All the successful children received special certificates and book tokens. The partnership is looking for external sponsorship to ensure that this very important way of celebrating the talent of our children and the hard work of their school communities can take place in future years.

The Community Strategy, our long term vision for the development of our district and its communities is now nearing completion. So far in excess of 1,000 residents' community groups, councils and government agencies have contributed to its development. I am very hopeful that once finally agreed in September this document will help focus all our partners on the issues that are most important to residents in the Epping Forest district, and through working more closely together achieve even better value for money with our reducing resources.

This year for the first time we have published an annual review which sets out in detail all the work that the partnership has undertaken over the last year. This is available at www.oneeppingforest.org.uk

In closing, as I am sure you are aware, the partnership, like many other local groups is struggling with funding issues as the new coalition government seeks to reduce the national deficit. Locally we have always benefitted from excellent relationships with colleagues from across the statutory, voluntary and business sectors and we will do everything we can to ensure that we manage these difficult choices in consultation with our partners.

Yours faithfully
Cllr Di Collins
Chairman of One Epping Forest