

Wealden voices **Wealden choices**

Wealden LSP

Meeting on Wednesday 8th December 2004

4pm at Hailsham East Community Centre.

Those attending

LSP Members:

Fiona Henniker (chairman)
John Kelly (WFVO)
Aprile Biggs (EA)
Cllr. Nigel Coltman (leader of Wealden DC)
Ian Chisnall (Churches Together)
C.I. Rex Matthews (Police)
Cllr Tony Reid (ESCC)
Tim Sparrow (SALC)
Mike Rogers (Fire Service)

Officers attending

Kieran McNamara (WDC – Regeneration)
Charmian Allcock (WDC – Exec Dept)
Alison Horan (ESCC)
Duncan Savage (ESCC)
Caroline Adcock (LSP Co-ordinator)

Apologies:

Jeremy Leggett (AirS)
Peter Swann (Beacon Community College)
Julia Brown (Eastbourne Downs PCT)

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The last meeting took place on 8th September 2004. The minutes were approved as a correct record.

Appointment of new chairman

Tim Sparrow of SALC was nominated to stand as chairman of Wealden LSP for the coming year. A proposal had been received from Trevor Leggo of SALC and this was seconded by Cllr. Tony Reid of ESCC. All were in favour.

Report of theme champion

Rex Matthews, theme champion of the Safer Wealden partnership, gave a presentation on the work of the partnership, otherwise known as the Wealden CDRP.

He explained that safety and crime issues were a hot topic for the Government, who had recently published large volumes of guidance creating a challenge for those implementing it.

A recent 3 year plan drawn up by the partnership included stronger involvement from the parish and town councils.

The main issue in Wealden is fear of crime and this is largely associated with anti-social behaviour. Wealden is probably one of the safest places to live in the whole of England, which means the police have a harder time identifying where and how to focus their activity to best effect. Despite this the Wealden Partnership is rated by GOSE as a high performer

Fear of crime varies considerably across the district and a one size fits all approach is not effective. Although previous activity focused on themes across the district, future initiatives will be concentrated on addressing specific problems at a much more local level. These are often caused by a small minority who are known to a number of organisations for different reasons. Shared access to this information, including close contact with the local community, will enable the partnership to tackle the instigators more effectively.

The partnership propose to maintain regular contact with a nominated elected representative from each of the parish councils. This will allow two way flow of information and a more co-operative approach, using the partnership as a clearing house or one stop shop. Problems will be tackled by the partnership as a whole taking on a small number (around 5) at a time with the aim of identifying solutions before moving on to new issues. In addition to regular contact by phone, a quarterly annual conference for parish representatives will be organised on a locality basis (2 in Northern Wealden and 2 in Southern Wealden) This will provide an opportunity for all agencies to build a joint approach to tackling crime at the local level in order to be as effective as possible.

This approach has already been successfully implemented in other areas; Members of the Safer Wealden partnership visited Canterbury where the system had been working well for at least six years.

GOSE are very keen to support this new way of working and have offered seed funding to ensure the project starts well. This will enable the partnership to develop some resources which will support the sharing of information and provide a focus for future activity. It may take the form of a virtual network between a variety of agencies including the RSPCA, Housing office, social services etc.

Performance Indicators will be linked to activity and will identify whether the community feels safer after the scheme has been in operation compared to before. Perception is an important aspect of making people feel good about the area in which they live and will also impact on attracting business and the stability of the population.

Rex pointed out that those most concerned about anti-social behaviour were often young people.

Members of Wealden LSP received the report enthusiastically and were keen to extend the idea of linking community representatives with other areas of activity. Suggestions were made to widen the remit of the community conferences which were being planned across the District to enable other LSP themes to be introduced

Cllr Mrs. Pam Doodes felt there was a need to involve those outside the statutory agencies. However, Rex Matthews assured the meeting that once the project has been piloted the partnership will seek to identify a wider range of partners who may provide a useful link in identifying trouble makers in an area as small as 50 square yards

Aprile Biggs was pleased to see that the new proposals would enable rapid response as zero tolerance has proved effective in other areas. The partnership approach will encourage issues to be reported before they escalate into crime and thus mobilise action at an early stage where a speedy and co-ordinated response using the local community can often achieve a resolution.

Partners wishing to engage with this initiative include the Environment Agency, the voluntary sector and Churches Together.

ACTION

Members are invited to consider the programme of the Safer Wealden Partnership in conjunction with suggestions for the future work programme of Wealden LSP. Comments to Caroline by early January for presentation at the February/March meeting of the Wealden LSP

Work Programme for the Future

Caroline Adcock circulated a short discussion paper posing questions as to how the LSP might wish to concentrate their resources in the year ahead. A diagram had also been prepared to indicate how Action in Rural Sussex were planning to work with individual towns and villages carrying out action plans and how this might integrate with the consultation programme for the Local Development Framework (copies attached)

Fiona Henniker requested that the minutes of the visioning exercise be circulated again to remind everyone of the outcomes. (copy attached)

Duncan Savage pointed out that the ESCC Internal Officer Support Group had identified working more closely with individual communities as a more useful approach in the year ahead and were promoting this theme in their dealings with District LSP's Whilst this could raise the focus of the LSP at a local level, and offer a greater degree of mutual understanding, concerns were raised that this could result in an unfair spread of resources, especially in an area like Wealden where many of the parishes might not see the benefits. The Safer Wealden Partnership is piloting a blend of developing links with each parish and enhancing communication using a locality conference approach and this might prove a more attractive option.

Cllr. Nigel Coltman pointed out that the annual Wealden District Parish Conference provided a very useful opportunity to disseminate information and make links with parishes. He felt that the LSP could build on this by involving greater input from a wide range of agencies working in partnership with the Council.

ACTION

Members are asked to consider these ideas and feed comments to Caroline for inclusion in a final document to be included in the Agenda for the next meeting in February / March.

Programme of meetings for 2005

The new chairman, Tim Sparrow, voiced a preference for bi-monthly meetings as it would allow a proper coverage of reporting on themes. Previously meetings of the LSP had taken place every 3 months and although members had very full diaries they agreed to trial a bi-monthly frequency, providing there was a degree of flexibility eg may not meet in August
E-mail will continue to play an important role in effective communication between members.

ACTION

Proposed dates for the year are attached.

Please inform Caroline if you CANNOT ATTEND any of these meetings by 8th January.

Confirmation of agreed dates will be circulated in mid January.

Reports back

ESSP

Ian Chisnall gave a resume of the proceedings. A recently produced video entitled "One of Us" had been shown depicting racism in Sussex. This was available to other organisations and provided a good stimulus to debate.
The new ESSP Co-ordinator, Diana Francombe was welcomed to the post.
SEERA presented an overview of The South East Plan.
Compact – Partners were invited to sign up to this document which outlines codes of practice to ensure statutory agencies work with the voluntary sector in a fair and reasonable manner. The initiative is being taken forward at County level

ACTION

John Kelly WFVS to give a brief presentation at the next meeting of the Wealden LSP to outline what the Compact means for partners in this area

The next meeting of ESSP takes place on 20th January at Hastings University Centre. All are welcome to attend. The meeting starts at 3pm with an informal discussion and the meeting proper begins at 4pm

AIF

Cllr. Nigel Coltman attended meetings of the ESEP and was able to comment on the AIF. Kieran McNamara also contributed views on how this would work
The delivery plan has been drawn up but not yet finalised and will depend on SEEDA's allocation to East Sussex. 1.5 million has been requested for 05/06 but it is unlikely that this will be available. The money must be spent on economic outputs and will be subject to rigorous reporting in the same way as SRB. Further details are due in mid December.

Peter Swan and Ken Stevens are already attending a number of AIF theme groups ie Transport, tourism, learning and business support

ACTION

Fiona Henniker suggested that the Wealden LSP maintain a close watching brief over future AIF activity to ensure we are fully engaged in the process

East Sussex in Figures

Background to Proposal

East Sussex County Council have been offered a grant of £110,000 from the ODPM to put together a data observatory. This would provide a comprehensive, regularly updated, easily accessible strategic information system to support the local strategic partnerships in monitoring their community strategies, as well as being available to the general public. This funding must be matched (can include time in lieu) and is a one off payment for setting up the project

The feasibility study for EsiF was undertaken in the spring of 2004, and is now entering the stage of detailed specifications and costings. ESCC have commissioned Care-Equation to identify appropriate sources of information and ascertain the needs of each of the LSP's in East Sussex as to what information is essential, desirable or least relevant and how it should be presented. Care-Equation have now completed their initial data search and are currently seeking responses from LSPs They also require feedback on the level of breakdown required ie size of unit for which data needs to be available, how often data is updated and whether it can be imported from a variety of sources in it's existing format.

A brief will be prepared and tenders sought from software providers.

A business plan will follow for consideration by The East Sussex in Figures Steering Group. This must include arrangements for ongoing maintenance of the data observatory.

A number of existing data sources and performance indicators already exist and are available on East Sussex County Council web sites eg Quality of Life Indicators, East Sussex in Figures. At present support and maintenance are provided by ESCC staff but it is likely that resources will be squeezed and staff time reduced.

Questions need to be asked about how existing data will fit with the new proposals and what will happen to current provision if the data observatory project is not progressed. .

Feedback received to date

Various options have been discussed and views sought:

There is a general feeling that the project is not viable unless funding can be identified in the medium to long term to maintain the process and that the information collected is meaningful and easy to access..

LSP's themselves do not have access to significant funds which they can allocate to this and must rely on lobbying their partners who may find the information useful in measuring their own performance indicators .

There is a good deal of confusion over the definition of a realistic performance indicator and who can lay claim to the results. Many of the statistics in the observatory provide a background and can indicate changes over time due to a whole variety of factors which no one organisation or partnership can claim responsibility for. Whilst these statistics are useful in highlighting areas for further activity, and provide justification for policies, they do not necessarily measure the performance of an LSP.

Recent experience (reflected in the visioning exercise of Wealden LSP) points to the need to focus down on fewer and more meaningful performance indicators which quantify and reflect activity undertaken. They should be "owned" by the LSP and used to demonstrate success.

Ian Chisnall stressed how valuable some data sets could be and felt that this programme provided a unique opportunity to link together useful data.

ACTION

Cynthia Lyons from the Sussex Downs PCT will attend the next steering group meeting and Caroline Adcock also hopes to be there. Further information will follow in due course and it is recognised that the LSP may be asked to provide funding to support this initiative.

Any other business

The South East Plan

Cllr. Nigel Coltman gave a lively presentation on the progress of the South East Plan and how this was being steered through the consultation process. Many people had reservations about SEERA since it had been tasked with the job of driving the plan forwards and yet 30% of its members were not elected. There was also concern that the plan had been rushed through and did not provide not a thoughtful analysis of all the issues involved.

The South East is already a heavily populated areas and yet the region intends to house many more people. Serious concerns were voiced over the lack of infrastructure. The Government did not seem willing to take responsibility and yet the developers were unlikely to pay for this and still keep the price of houses within budget, especially if these were affordable dwellings. No attempts had been made to specify tenure type and there was a lack of clarity as to where the jobs might come from. No attempt had been made to identify sites for travellers and there was concern that the quality of life was being swept aside in favour of economic growth.

Once the plan had been approved Wealden would be able to release large blocks of land for development. The Council should take this opportunity to encourage at least 25% social housing on these sites since this district is well below average for this type of tenure.

The consultation process which SEERA has voted for constitutes a major change to existing local democratic framework and the intention is to use MORI poll together with a leaflet through every door with a response form. Scepticism was voiced as to whether sufficient resources were available to analyse the results.

ACTION

Wealden LSP is urged to provide a meaningful response to this plan which links with the themes in our community strategy. The LSP welcomes any opportunity to take part in arranging a public consultation event in Wealden.

Fire Service

Mike Rogers of the Fire Service introduced the Action plan for 2005/2006 and invited responses.

ACTION

The Wealden LSP will prepare a response and invite members to comment on behalf of their own organisations.

Copies of the document available from Caroline or Mike

Electronic copy to be circulated asap

Vote of Thanks

Cllr. Nigel Coltman proposed a vote of thanks to Fiona for all her hard work in chairing the partnership during the previous year.

Date, Time and Place of next meeting

Wednesday January 16th 4pm at Hailsham East Community Centre

The meeting closed at 6pm