

Issue No. 9

Summer 2005

Newsletter

Community Planning in East Sussex

Welcome to the new look *Community Planning in East Sussex*, the newsletter to bring you up to date with community planning across the county.

Distribution:

This newsletter is distributed by email only. If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining our mailing list or have items for inclusion in the next issue, please email essp@eastsussex.gov.uk

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better
by working together

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Headlines

Local Area Agreement Success!

East Sussex has been successful in its bid to be part of the next round of Local Area Agreements (LAAs). This is a three-year agreement between central and local government, together with local partners, around four thematic blocks:

- Children and Young People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Economic Development and Enterprise

What are the benefits?

- Strengthened local partnership working
- Mechanism to agree shared local priorities, to which local delivery partners are signed up
- Incorporates the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) with the potential to bring additional funding into the county
- Opportunities for aligning and potentially pooling budgets

What's happened so far?

East Sussex County Council hosted a launch event for local partners at the Kings Centre in Eastbourne on 22 July. Since then, work has been underway to identify potential priorities for inclusion. These will be debated at the ESSP Wider Partners event on 8 September. Timescales are tight with an initial submission due to Government Office by the end of September. The target sign-off date is February 2006.

You can keep up to date with progress with the new LAA section on the East Sussex Strategic Partnership website www.essp.org.uk

East Sussex in Figures

After an extensive feasibility study, the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in East Sussex have now all agreed to participate in the East Sussex in Figures (ESIF) Project. The project aims to provide a one-stop source of user-friendly, customisable data for LSPs and their Partners to help with the development and monitoring of strategies and plans at all levels in the County. Funding has been secured from the ODPM to develop the web-based system, with partner contributions pledged to cover the rest.

A Project Board, with representatives from all the LSPs, has been established and a software supplier has been selected. As the system is developed, the Board will continue to work closely with the LSPs, as both users and data providers, to ensure that the project meets their needs.

The recruitment of the East Sussex in Figures Co-ordinator is in progress and it is hoped that the post will be filled in the autumn. After testing and fine-tuning in September and October, it is anticipated that East Sussex in Figures will be up and running, and available to all partners, in November.

Change Up

A local consortium is now in place to take forward the *Change Up* programme to build capacity East Sussex's voluntary sector and put in place the infrastructure support needed to make this happen. The consortium includes members of the statutory sector, infrastructure organisations, smaller local voluntary organisations and Action in Rural Sussex (as accountable body).

Across East Sussex

Community Planning in East Sussex

East Sussex Economic Partnership

The ESEP have completed the process of incorporation, and are now a Company Limited by Guarantee.

This change is matched by changes in staff which includes the appointment of a Project Development Officer and Monitoring & Evaluation Officer to support the delivery of the East Sussex Area Investment Framework.

Mark Pearson has been appointed as Chief Executive, joining the ESEP from an economic partnership in the North West of England.

The ESEP Board has agreed project appraisal guidance, for use in managing devolved funding available through the Area Investment Framework (AIF). Guidance includes an independent assessment of strategic fit to ensure that proposed projects are aligned with the relevant community strategies.

Second Homes Success

The good uses that Second Homes funding is being put to by the District and Borough LSPs were celebrated at the LGA Conference in July.

Details of some of the projects being undertaken were showcased on the County Councils Network Stand in the Exhibition Hall during the middle two days of the Conference. A great deal of interest was shown by other local authorities – especially those that do not currently benefit from any funding!

Making a Difference

The East Sussex Strategic Partnership, which doesn't receive Second Homes money, was provided with £60,000 by the County Council in 2004/05 to establish the Making a Difference Grant Scheme.

The Scheme was a great success with 22 small grants being awarded across the county and the fund was completely allocated by the end of May 2005.

Children's Trust

Consultation has been underway throughout the summer to establish a Children's Trust for East Sussex. The Children's Act 2004 sets out a wide agenda for the wellbeing of children, to be owned by every organisation within a locality that works with children. Other organisations that do not work directly with children, but influence their lives, for example housing associations, will also need to be involved. The proposal strengthens the existing work of LSPs to work together to improve the quality of life for children and young people in East Sussex.

Proposals include:

- a) Child-centred, outcome led vision – informed by the views of local children, young people and their families
- b) Integrated front line delivery – organised around the needs of the child and not around professional or agency boundaries
- c) Integrated processes and information sharing – to enable effective joint working
- d) Integrated strategy – joint planning and commissioning to target resources where they are needed most
- e) Inter-agency governance – ensuring strong leadership and accountability of all partners

It is hoped to have governance arrangements in place by September in time to oversee the development of the first Children & Young People's Plan.

LSP News

East Sussex

- The success of the East Sussex LAA bid provides a new focus for the ESSP, building on work already underway including preparatory work for the second Local Public Service Agreement and the forthcoming review of the Community Strategy. Wider Partners attended a launch event on 22 July, and LAA will be the subject of the Annual Wider Partners event on 8 September.
- The 2005 annual update of the Community Strategy is available now at www.essp.org.uk
- Jon Hall (East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service) led a discussion at the April ESSP meeting urging Partners to take a broader approach to the community safety agenda, beyond crime. There is a real opportunity, through the Safer & Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement, for the ESSP to take up this challenge.

Eastbourne

- The ESP is moving from process to action and all partners have agreed to participate in an Area Profile Project of Devonshire Ward. The objectives of the project are to improve services and quality of life for residents, improve outcomes supporting the delivery of the Community Strategy and to make better use of existing resources. The project falls into two main parts: data collection and community engagement. A Project Board and Project Team are in place.
- The revised Eastbourne Community Strategy 2005- 2020 has now been published. The format is based on the results of an Elected Member Validation Exercise carried out in 2004. The new document is user friendly and focused around seven themes, with 20 key indicators of progress.
- The ESP has endorsed the Eastbourne Community Network as the body through which community representation to the ESP is developed. A protocol between the ESP and the Eastbourne Community Network is being developed and it is hoped to have community representatives on the ESP Core Group by January 2006.

Hastings & St Leonards

- The LSP last met on 18 July. Cllr Jeremy Birch took the Chair on behalf of the statutory sector for the coming year from Alastair Fairley of the Community Network.
- Progress was welcomed on the LSP's two key cross cutting priorities for 2005/6, agreed at the April Away Day. These are:
 - Improving family support and vocational learning to reduce exclusions from school
 - Ensuring economic regeneration projects benefit the whole community – with particular focus on priority neighbourhoods.
- The first round of Community Strategy targets is due to be achieved in 2005. Targets will be reviewed over the autumn, with a revised Community Strategy published by April 2006.
- The LSP has given the green light to the development of area coordination. The aim is to get partners working together to improve and shape service delivery, based on local needs, and influenced by local people. The town has been divided into four areas – each will prepare an annual Area Delivery Plan and will have a Multi-Agency Tasking Team in place to coordinate and deliver action.

LSP News

Lewes

- The Lewes District LSP last met in June. Three projects are currently being funded from the second homes tax money: Development Workers progressing local projects for the area partnerships in towns and rural areas; supporting the development of the East Sussex in Figures programme; and funding a Rapid Action Planning Project which supports small villages in developing village action plans.
- The Community Strategy is currently being revised to make it more action focused, based on priority themes and addressing inequalities in the district.
- The dedicated LSP website, Local Voices Local Choices, is getting a makeover and will go live at the end of September. The web addresses is www.lvlc.info. Comments on the new website can be directed to lvlc@lewes.gov.uk
- The LSP is currently responding to issues such as Local Area Agreements, Children's Services structures and the Local Development Framework/South East Plan. The next meeting is to be held on 26th September in Newhaven.

Rother

- The Rother LSP is to hold its second Community Forum on Thursday 29 September at Battle Memorial Hall. The Forum will launch the Rother Action Plans Support Programme, funded from 05/06 2nd homes council tax money. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will present an update on community planning in Rother and set out their vision for the development of the LSP over the coming years. Action Groups will present their action plans and displays on projects funded through the 04/05 2nd home council tax fund.
- The next LSP Board meeting will be held on 7 September. Agenda items include:
 - Updates from Action Groups
 - Parish Action Plans Programme
 - Local Area Agreements
 - Local Development Framework
 - South East PlanTo receive an agenda or reserve a place at the Forum, please contact Scott Lavocah on 01424 787863 or email scott.lavocah@rother.gov.uk

Wealden

- The Wealden LSP has revised its web site to ensure it meets all the latest standards in terms of accessibility. The web site offers the chance to keep up to date on the work of the Partnership with minutes, reports and news posted on a regular basis. The Cultural Partnership also hopes to use the website as a way of keeping everyone informed of activities which their members are involved in. The revised site will be launched shortly and will be accessible using the existing web address: www.wealdencommunitystrategy.co.uk
- Following the announcement of an LAA for East Sussex, Wealden LSP and Wealden Council have been looking at their own strategies, structures and corporate plan with a view to ensuring full participation in the development and delivery of the LAA. The LSP look forward to working more closely with other organisations in East Sussex to progress this exciting new initiative.

National and Regional News

Big Lottery Fund confirms new funding programmes

On 30 March the Big Lottery Fund announced four new strategic funding programmes to be launched from Autumn 2005, to support three themes:

- Community learning and creating opportunity;
- Promoting community cohesion and safety; and
- Promoting wellbeing.

Sound awfully like themes within all the Community Strategies in East Sussex, don't they! So it will come as no surprise that the announced programmes offer potential for LSPs and their VCS partners to develop

bids which will help improve quality of life.

Programmes include:

- *Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure* (£155 million)
- *Children's Play* (£155 million)
- *Environmental Programme* (£354 million)
- *Wellbeing Programme* (£165 million)

Further information can be found at: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk.

A source close to ODPM writes...

ODPM recently seconded one its up and coming managers, Claire Brialey, to East Sussex County Council for three months. Having previously worked in the unit that prepared guidance for LSPs, Claire reflects on the experience of actually getting involved in such a body!

"Charles Fort once commented that the technology for steam engines existed for centuries before the Industrial Revolution, but it took a specific set of social and economic conditions for the full potential to be realised. Then, suddenly, it was steam engine time and they were quickly put to a variety of uses. Well, the turn of the new millennium was Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) time. In Whitehall, we didn't necessarily agree exactly what a local strategic partnership should be, but we all knew we needed them to happen.

It's been said that a hippopotamus is what you get when a committee sets out to design a greyhound, and early drafts of LSP guidance did raise the spectre of a slightly baffled hippo. The general idea was clear enough but the details quickly got confusing – not least because we wanted each local authority to work out, with their partners, what arrangements would best suit them, and it was difficult to write guidance which could match that kind of diversity.

In the event, I moved on to another job before I got to see any LSPs in action. It's part of the nature of working for a Government Department that you rarely get to see all stages of a project, so you miss some part of either the idea or the implementation.

But earlier this year I had the opportunity to sit in on a meeting of the East Sussex Strategic Partnership, and indeed the chance to use for the first time in years my introductory joke 'I'm from Whitehall and I'm here to help.'

I must say it's quite strange to see something working in practice that can only ever be theoretical from behind a desk in Whitehall. It's also really rewarding. Especially as I realised that, while it might not be quite the greyhound of a civil servant's imagination, I was seeing something which, in metaphorical terms, looked like a dog and barked like a dog. And although local variation was always meant to be part of the point, learning about even one LSP helps a lot in understanding the different challenges that different LSPs might face in future."