

## WEALDEN LSP

### Notes of the meeting on Wednesday 10th January 3 – 5pm at Hailsham East Community Centre

#### Present

##### Partners

Cllr Nigel Coltman	Leader, Wealden District Council, Acting LSP Chair
Cllr Chantal Wilson	Wealden District Council
Cllr Laura Murphy	Wealden District Council
Cl Neil Honnor	District Commander, Sussex Police
Mark O'Brien	District Commander, East Sussex Fire and Rescue
Jessica Britton	East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT
Paul Smith	Environment Agency
Alison Horan	East Sussex County Council (for Cllr Tony Reid)
Philip Ayers	East Sussex Rural Transport Partnership
Greg Falvey	Town & Country Housing Group
Ken Stevens	Federation of Small Businesses
Ian Chisnall	Churches Together in Sussex
Karen Crozier	Community Network Steering Group
Jeff Hart	Managing Director, Freedom Leisure
Peter Minshall	Highways Agency
Martin Small	South Downs Joint Committee

##### In attendance

Mike Fleming	Director for Environmental Services, Wealden District Council
David Palmer	Head of Policy and Review, Wealden District Council
Caroline Adcock	LSP – LDF Liaison, Wealden District Council
Gill Cameron Waller	LSP Policy & Admin, Wealden District Council
Michelle Patmore	Community Liaison & Engagement Officer, Wealden District Council
Lisa Schrevel	East Sussex County Council / East Sussex Strategic Partnership
Cllr Di Phillips	Wealden District Council

#### Apologies for absence

Cllr Tony Reid	East Sussex County Council
Sean Nolan	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Pam Doodles	Wealden District Council
Kathy Fordham	NFU
Teresa Gittins	Action in Rural Sussex (for Jeremy Leggett)

#### 1.1 Notes of the last meeting

These were approved as a correct record

#### 1.2 Matters arising

Government guidance on LSPs is not now expected until later in the year.

The Rural Transport Partnership visit to explore biomass with an organisation in Oxford will not now take place in January.

The final report from Sir Michael Lyons' inquiry is now expected at the end of March.

## 2. Local Development Framework – related (LDF)

### 2.1 Revision to Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The timeframe for the Wealden LDS has been revised and submitted to GOSE to allow a little more time to ensure robustness over speed. This follows difficulties experienced by certain other local planning authorities in securing approval for their core strategies on grounds of 'soundness'. The Core Strategy now needs to identify broad areas for development which will be further refined in the Site Allocations document. The LDF team is currently gathering evidence from key agencies about infrastructure capacity. LSP Board Members have a key role to make links between other Partnership members and forward planning and strategy staff

within their organisations. In order to facilitate this as part of the LDF process, it was agreed that Wealden District Council's LDF team would copy any letters to the respective Board Members.

Partners indicated that the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) are very interested in being part of the LDF process, but have little or no historical experience of such involvement. This is likely to prove challenging for both VCS partners and planners, and will require commitment and determination from everyone.

Public participation arrangements are set out in the Statement of Community Involvement [ [Wealden SCI](#) ] which drew over 2000 responses in its consultation phase.

## **2.2 LSP Partner involvement:**

## **WLSP 2007 Report 34**

Interviews were conducted with many LSP partners, who all expressed their willingness to share information and contribute to the LDF process. This report outlines the resulting model developed to allow LSP partners to get involved in the research topics identified for the Wealden LDF. At the meeting, members were invited to 'adopt' a topic/topics, which would involve joining a topic group, linking into networks beyond the immediate LSP Board and helping to develop options for consideration. These will be reported back in due course to the main LSP Board for discussion.

<b>Core Strategy Research topic</b>	<b>LSP Board member(s)</b>
Housing	Greg Falvey, Town & Country Housing Ian Chisnall, Churches Together in Sussex Mark O'Brien, East Sussex Fire & Rescue
Business	Ken Stevens, Federation of Small Businesses ESCC (via Alison Horan)
Transport	Ian Chisnall, Churches Together in Sussex Mark O'Brien, East Sussex Fire & Rescue Neil Honnor, Sussex Police Karen Crozier, Community Network Steering Group Philip Ayers, Rural Transport Partnership Peter Minshull, Highways Agency ESCC (via Alison Horan)
Environment	Martin Small, South Downs Joint Committee Paul Smith, Environment Agency Greg Falvey, Town & Country Housing ESCC (via Alison Horan)
Waste	ESCC (via Alison Horan)
Infrastructure	Jeff Hart, Freedom Leisure Neil Honnor, Sussex Police Jessica Britton, East Sussex Downs & Weald PCT ESCC (via Alison Horan)
Sustainability	Martin Small, South Downs Joint Committee Paul Smith, Environment Agency Greg Falvey, Town & Country Housing ESCC (via Alison Horan)

Caroline Adcock has been allocated the Business topic within the LDF team, but she will also be working with other LDF team members to ensure that a similar model is used to involve LSP members. As an example, the business group has been commenting on a draft consultant's brief for a report which will provide evidence to inform the development of preferred options. The involvement in research topic groups of Wealden District Councillors who are also members of the LSP Board would be resolved between them.

## **2.3 Eastbourne LDF Core Strategy: Preferred Options**

## **WLSP 2007 Report 35**

Eastbourne's Core strategy Preferred Options paper was received by Wealden LSP as part of Eastbourne's public consultation process. The deadline for response is 16<sup>th</sup> February 2007, and it is an opportunity for the LSP to respond as a body, without prejudice to responses from

individual partner organisations. One of the strengths of the LSP is that it should be able to think across organisational and administrative boundaries, and take a more integrated approach. This is not necessarily an easy task, and there is a potential learning opportunity for the Board to find ways to achieve this.

The Board noted that whilst no specific geographical settlements were mentioned within Eastbourne's own boundaries, the paper clearly had implications for potential development crossing over into Wealden District, in terms of housing development, a possible Park and Ride Scheme, other transport issues and potential business opportunities. It is recognised that there is a need to take account of the complexities of living and travel to work patterns which bear no particular relation to local administrative structures, and the Board welcomed the ongoing efforts put into effective cross-boundary collaboration.

They also welcomed the fact that Wealden District Council had sought and received clarification from Eastbourne Borough Council's Planning Department about their ability to accommodate all Eastbourne's housing allocation from the South East Plan within their own boundaries. It was also noted that Wealden District Council's Local Development Scheme itself recognises that administrative boundaries do not necessarily reflect needs, and that partnership work is anticipated between all the different service providers.

There was some discussion around the topic-based process Eastbourne had used to develop the options presented. Some partners had been involved in this process and felt that it had been interesting and worthwhile.

The report also sparked discussion around transport, which is a primary area for concern in the area generally, and Highways Agency explained their approach to assessing LDF proposals in the South East. This is highly dependent on a firm of consultants as there are 109 LDFs across the region, 98 of which impact on trunk roads. A key requirement is to assess potential impact on the trunk road network, as well as transport in general, with sustainable travel an important factor. It was clear that there was very little scope for major improvements to the trunk road network other than those already planned. The Agency is concerned to encourage non car-based travel, and it was pointed out that the only alternative to the trunk road network is rail. It was felt that there was room for clarification on the involvement of Network Rail in the development of future plans, and here was also a suggestion for the participation of DFT Rail who are responsible for the Brighton mainline route which links into more local services.

#### **2.4 Blueprint for the Eastbourne – Hailsham Triangle** **WLSP 2007 Report 36**

This project is a current example of practical partnership working on a holistic basis between two adjacent local authorities and other partners with similar and complementary objectives. At a recent meeting which included the County Council, it had been agreed that officers from the partner authorities would work together, probably along the lines of the Rother and Hastings Development Board, and learning lessons from their experience. It will be important that this project is taken into full account in both the Eastbourne and Wealden LDFs.

The A 27 trunk road issue was raised again as it is seen as crucial to further developments in the part of the county. However, it was clear that any future plans would have to be realistic in their ambitions for transport improvements and recognise that local environmental sensitivities are a barrier, for example, to the dualling of the A27. It was also noted that a dualled A27 might open the way to even higher housing quotas being imposed through the regional planning process. There was a general consensus that it would be helpful to take a fresh look at road management techniques which might help alleviate some of the difficulties.

### **3. Other matters**

#### **3.1 North Wealden Community Transport Partnership**

As some enquiries had been received on this subject, Philip Ayers, Co-ordinator of the East Sussex Rural Transport Partnership gave a brief overview of this emerging project, and background papers from WDC Scrutiny Committee were made available at the meeting. The intention is to extend the existing Easylink service west of Crowborough to a full dial-a-ride service also covering Uckfield and villages to the south and east of both towns. The initiative has been instigated by the Crowborough Partnership and is receiving a good level of support.

#### **3.2 East Sussex Economic Partnership Annual Conference**

Councillor Chantal Wilson had attended the ESEP Annual Conference in November on behalf of Councillor Coltman (acting LSP Chair). As time was short at the meeting, she briefly mentioned that an overview of the year's activity from ESEP Chief Executive Mark Pearson had included some case studies of successful knowledge-based, low infrastructure-dependent companies in East Sussex. The second part of the event focused on group discussions intended to contribute to a refresh of the East Sussex Economic Development Strategy. Her notes are circulated with these meeting notes.

### **3.3 Wealden DC Budget: Consultation on Proposals** **WLSP 2007 Report 37**

The LSP Board welcomed the opportunity to comment on the Council's proposed budget, and noted the inclusion of £20k in the mainstream budget to support the LSP. The Board appreciated the Council's lead on financial support for the partnership, particularly as other sources of funding have been withdrawn. It also recognised that all partners contribute resources in kind through time and wider partnership activities. Where partners have Sussex-wide responsibilities, they may be supporting as many as 15 LSPs in total.

## **4. Updates**

### **4.1 Wealden Community Strategy revision – next steps**

Final comments had been received from partners on the draft text of the revised Community Strategy, and these will be incorporated into the document. It will then be 'signed off' by the LSP Chairman and presented to Wealden District Council for adoption at the next Full Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> February.

### **4.2 Local Area Agreement**

The first refresh has been submitted with minimal changes on GOSE's advice. Work to identify proposals for the next refresh will begin after April and district/borough LSPs will be involved through the East Sussex LSP Co-ordinators' Group. This group is meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> January to look at how the LSPs can work together on sustainable community strategies for which the LAA is a delivery mechanism. GOSE have not yet given a timetable for future monitoring of the LAA, and this has a knock-on effect on dates for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership, its sub-partnerships and their work. Quarter 3 monitoring is getting under way, and Quarter 2 results show progress in a positive direction. LAA performance data is published on the ESSP website.

## **5. AOB**

### **5.1 WDC Corporate Plan**

One of the ways in which partners can play their part in implementing the community strategy is by ensuring that it is taken into account when their organisational plans are drawn up and / or revised. The recent Government White Paper *'Strong and Prosperous Communities'* sets the scene for stronger community engagement and leadership, and the Council is building its corporate plan with the stated objectives of the Wealden Community Strategy firmly in mind. A draft for consultation should be available by 7<sup>th</sup> February and this will be circulated to partners for comment in due course.

### **5.2 LSP Board meetings & venues**

Partners recognised the difficulty of finding dates when everyone could be available, even a year in advance, but felt that the revised schedule should stand as it avoided. The principle of being more peripatetic within the district met with general approval, although geographical remoteness (especially from the A27) could be an issue for some. The next meeting is to be held in Heathfield, and the secretariat agreed to explore options elsewhere, including Polegate which would offer the additional option of rail travel for some partners.

## **6. Chairmanship**

Cllr Nigel Coltman, as acting chairman, informed the Board that one name had emerged from the partners as a proposed new chairman, Ian Chisnall, who had confirmed his willingness to stand. This proposal was supported by general agreement from the board members and Ian will take the chair with immediate effect.

**Date, time and place of next meeting:** Friday 16 March 2007, 10:00 – 12:00, Heathfield Community Centre, Sheepsetting Lane, Heathfield TN21 0XG