

**Notes of Wealden Local Strategic Partnership Meeting – 15 July 2008
held at Herstmonceux Village Hall**

Present:

Ian Chisnall – Chair, Churches Together in Sussex
Alison Horan – Head of Community Partnership, East Sussex County Council
Cllr Roy Galley – WDC Portfolio-holder for Strategic Planning and Housing Delivery
Kathy Fordham – NFU Representative
Cllr Linda Francis – Willingdon & Jevington Parish Councillor
Marie Tomblin – Community Development Co-ordinator, Eastbourne Association of
Voluntary Services
Claire Stephenson – Neighbourhood Inspector, Sussex Police
Cllr Pam Doodes – Leader, WDC
Cllr David White – WDC Councillor
Lisa Compton – PCT, Director of Patient and Public Engagement & Corporate Affairs
Joanna Hodgson – Sustainable Development Project Manager, Environment Agency
David Chaffey – Assistant Housing Services Director, Downland HA
Ken Stevens – Regional Organiser, Federation of Small Businesses
Cllr Chantal Wilson – WDC Councillor
Teresa Gittins – Action in Rural Sussex, Director of Policy

In Attendance

Diana Carlick – WDC, Cultural Services Officer
Nigel Eveleigh – WDC, Planning Policy Manager
Charles Lant – WDC, Chief Executive
Tom Stuart – WDC, Policy Assistant
Gill Cameron-Waller – WDC, Policy and Partnership Manager

Apologies:

Jeff Hart – Freedom Leisure, Managing Director
Martin Small – South Downs Joint Committee
Neil Honnor – Sussex Police, Wealden Commander
Mark O'Brien – East Sussex Fire and Rescue
Richard Watson, PCT

Welcome and Introductions

Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

LAA signed off – see under agenda item
Wealden District Council – Corporate Charter Mark
Engaging Parish Councils
Housing Partnership Review – Unique, useful and frank event. Judge on
change over the next year

The notes were signed as an accurate record.

Matters for AOB

A potential LSP event on Comprehensive Area Assessment
New LAA Engagement Officer post
Worklessness and Housing

Business Items

Membership and representation

Town & Parish Councils

Trevor Leggo was recognised in his absence for an excellent job representing T&PCs. At Wealden Association of Local Councils (WALC), three T&PC councillors were elected as representatives – northern and southern PCs and a TC rep. The current LSP constitution allocates one local council representative place on the Board, but three nominations allow for informal rotation. In any case observers are welcome to all the LSP meetings and subject to attendance IC would usually hope to include the views of those attending. The views of LSP members are invited (contact IC or GCW). T&PC involvement in LSP welcomed, as were the advantages in terms of feeding back from LSP to T&PCs. The consensus approach of the LSP and its partnership basis was noted.

LF explained that there would be a broad range of views across different T&PCs. At this stage she could represent these to an extent, but was mainly familiar with local views. LF is happy to take LSP output back to WALC for discussion and bring back wider thoughts. LF looked forward to developing the ability to represent the wider range of views.

The two other reps (both of whom were unable to attend this meeting) are: William King (Maresfield) and Barry Murray (Uckfield).

Offer of help to LF similar to Parish Clerks network. A twice yearly newsletter for T&PCs suggested, but not discussed in detail.

Recognition of the onus on all LSP members to feed back to those they represent.

Environment Agency

Joanna Hodgson welcomed, with recognition of the EA's contribution, especially on the LDF.

Other

Other gaps have appeared in LSP representation. Transport (though AH representing ESCC); Karen Crozier has now moved on, but Marie Tomblin from EAVS was attending helping to provide a link to the VCS; Citizen's Advice Bureau have expressed an interest in joining, IC extended a welcome for them to attend as observers.

A discussion was held regarding the defunct Wealden Federation of Voluntary Organisations, and its possible successor. EAVS and SDCVS have both been providing a very good service to the Wealden VCS which may obviate the need for a specific Wealden CVS. The loose affiliation Voices has also ended, but a 'Speak up' forum is appointing a worker to work across the whole of East Sussex. In the future it may be possible to approach the forum to help identify a representative to sit on the LSP. 'Speak up' forum is being funded for one year initially and then this will be evaluated.

Aligning Community planning and spatial planning

Local Development Framework update (Nigel Eveleigh)

A number of changes:

- Roy Galley is WDC's new portfolio-holder for Strategic Planning and Housing Delivery, replacing Keith Whitehead
- Caroline Adcock and Michelle Patmore leaving the LDF team
- New guidance from government on the LDF

Three issues to raise:

1. A new LDF consultation phase is likely – the 'preferred options' consultation has been dropped. LSP will want to participate.
2. Evidence gathering is reaching a climax. Evidence can be public opinion as well as facts and figures. Team would like to share the evidence with the LSP and more widely.
3. Need to think of alternative ways of testing the emerging choices. LSP might like to help host an event(s).

Discussion:

None of the ground made already will be lost. Recognised need to work on communications and public opinion and government confidence – demonstrating that they can trust WDC to deliver successfully through LDF. The Infrastructure gap was raised. KS raised the example of the loss at appeal of Dittons – was Wealden's key employment site, appeal said accept Housing/ Employment mix. Not just about housing though that's controversial. Delays resulting from legislative change need to be communicated. Have to recognise that the public may be generally against some of the difficult choices Councillors will have to make.

Recently published Statutory Guidance 'Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities' circulated. Worth reading, but particular attention drawn to chapter 2 on LSPs (not statutory guidance owing to non-statutory nature of the LSP). Reaffirms strong link between Sustainable Community Strategies and LDFs.

Delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy – the LAA and Action Planning (Alison Horan)

Delivery plan for LAA being drafted. However, most of SCS lies outside LAA – East Sussex Assembly met last week to look at priorities in this bracket. Need to decide on how this is done with limited resources. Also need to monitor performance (see guidance), but not make an industry of that. APACS and Vital Signs cover some.

Discussion:

Action is being taken, question is how we feed that in to monitoring and make those involved aware of our need for information. Not the first time we've tackled this – previously ended up with a narrative of achievements – balanced approach needed.

AH: ESSP is taking a thematic approach. Identifying gaps in delivery, especially where these cut across themes. Need to think about how we can add value in this sense and avoid duplication.

Suggestion of using thematic approach, with those knowing about a theme subjectively identifying which of the high level SCS priorities needs most work. Wealden LSP to identify one activity under each theme to pursue. Success of Housing event cited. For next meeting.

Question for all: what is the one thing in SCS that would make the biggest difference?

Action GCW to circulate link to LAA to partners & create template for SCS theme priorities outside the LAA.

Theme partnership review

Housing Delivery – Stakeholder event, 23rd May 2008

As discussed in matters arising: Unique, useful and frank event. Judge on change over the next year.

What effect is the 'credit crunch' having on RSLs? Most new RSL developments involve an element of shared ownership – build and sell – because there is an element of risk. Figures worked out on predicted value of sales using net present value calculations over 40 years. This is very uncertain at present. For rural schemes where there is no issue of shared ownership, there should be no problem.

There is an emphasis on HOPE and Exception sites. Disappointment about intermediate housing – great need for rented accommodation. DCh: schemes set up with an element of shared ownership because of the funding gap. Capacity at Wealden seen as an issue, exception site example. Analysis of stakeholder event identifies three key problems to address – land, planning service issues and culture of resistance. Suggestion of taking P&T Councillors and other community leaders around good schemes as demonstration – always a few challenges, but most sites function well.

Updates and other items

Rural Access to Services Programme (Teresa Gittins)

AirS has signed three-year SEEDA contract worth £100,000. Identifying which urban based services could be delivered from five village hubs across East Sussex. These partly identified through accessibility analysis. May develop further outreach based out of hubs.

Working with Parish Councils to develop information points to increase awareness of services that are available.

Bringing together service providers who are interested in rural delivery in a seminar (date tbc).

Update from the PCT (Lisa Compton)

Strategic priorities around 'World Class Commissioning'. Will be asking the LSP to feed into PCT Assurance Framework (self-assessment and stakeholder review). Refresh of Strategic Commissioning Plan + consultation. Have been running workshops to inform investment and disinvestment decisions.

NHS constitution being republished. Details of consultations on this and on Strategic Health Authorities to be forwarded to LSP (**Action LC**). National talk of rebranding of NHS.

Mike Wood appointed as new Chief Executive – start date September/October

Discussion:

Concern over disinvestment in cottage hospitals. LC: will do as much as possible within Primary and Community Care, specialist operations to be done elsewhere.

Update on Green Gym (Diana Carlick)

Community Sport Network has looked at themes and picked out priorities.

Had support for Green Gym, but a 3 yr project would need an employed co-ordinator, so there was a funding issue. Hailsham Community College came forward with idea of working with primary schools in allotments. Goal of tackling obesity. Agreed to write letter of support

for project (**Action IC/GCW**). Project links with a number of other wider initiatives, e.g. healthy eating.

Communication

Wealden District Council – Corporate Plan 2008–11

Now published: Pam Doodes thanked all those who had been involved in the consultation.

LSPs in East Sussex – new publication (Alison Horan)

Publication of summary of what LSPs are, why we have an SCS and what we've achieved being distributed to all local councillors. To be followed with a summary of Pride of Place.

AOB

Worklessness (David Chaffey)

Housing Partnership set up worklessness sub-group to tackle issues. Many links: tenant profiling by Downland Housing; Job Centre Plus getting into rural areas – joined up working.

Comprehensive Area Assessment event (Gill Cameron-Waller)

Following on from events held by other East Sussex LSPs, support for Wealden to hold an event on Comprehensive Area Assessment with Audit Commission. Decisions are being made about CAA, and LSP members are encouraged to get involved.

LAA Engagement Officer (Alison Horan)

One year post, will be subject of SIP bid, officer to be steered by LSP co-ordinators group. Hoping to broaden officers role from LAA only to Pride of Place – finding out what is going on across different organisations and embedding LAA/PoP within organisations.

Next Meeting: 17 September, Herstmonceux Village Hall