

Wealden Local Strategic Partnership

Notes of the Wider Partners Meeting which took place on 18 March 2004
at Uckfield Civic Centre

Present:

Charmian Allcock – Wealden District Council
Phillip Ayers – East Sussex Rural Transport Partnership
Xanne Carey – Wealden Education Business Partnership
Sheila Charlesworth – Uckfield and District Volunteer Bureau
Mary Coburn – Wealden Housing Partnership
Councillor Nigel Coltman – Wealden District Council
Phil Dixon – Mayfield Partnership
Councillor Pam Doodes – Wealden District Council
Ron Easton – Crowborough and District Sports Association
Liz Fenton – Care for the Carers
Diana Francombe – Wealden District Council
Rachel Harrison – Sussex Sports Partnership
Mo Hemsley – East Sussex County Council
Fiona Henniker – Sussex Downs and Weald PCT
Janice Hoad – East Sussex Association for the Blind
Councillor Nancy Holmes – Hartfield Parish Council
Alison Horan – East Sussex County Council
Ann Hudson – Soroptimist International, Lewes and District
Elizabeth Hughes – East Sussex County Council
Elizabeth Johnson – Churches Together in Crowborough
Peter Joslin – Uckfield and District Volunteer Bureau
John Kelly – Wealden Federation of Voluntary Organisations
Barry Knights – Uckfield Revitalisation Partnership
Carolyn Lambert – Hailsham Trust
Charles Lant – Wealden District Council
Jackie Marsh – Anchor Staying Put
Chief Inspector Rex Matthews – Sussex Police
Rosie May-Smith – Heathfield Partnership
Nicky Millward – Wealden District Council
Councillor Laura Murphy – Wealden District Council
Ralph Oleson – Churches Together in Hailsham
Steve Padfield – Sport England
Councillor Raymond Parsons – Wealden District Council
John Patmore - Sompriti
Councillor Mrs Diana Phillips – Wealden District Council
Councillor Brian Redman – Wealden District Council
Sandie Reed – Legal Services Commission
Peter Relf – Wealden Youth Action
Duncan Savage – East Sussex County Council
Cllr Tim Sparrow – Sussex Association of Local Councils
Ken Stevens – Federation of Small Businesses
Councillor Roger Thomas – East Sussex County Council
R. L. Thompson – Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies

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Councillor Rob Tice – Polegate Town Council
Councillor Bob Tidy – East Sussex County Council
Councillor Sylvia Tidy – Wealden District Council
Adam Vernon – Learning + Skills Council
Councillor Brian West – Wealden District Council
Councillor Chantal Wilson – Wealden District Council
Clive Wilson – Crowborough Partnership

Notes

Fiona Henniker, Chairman of the Wealden Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), welcomed the wider partners to the meeting. The purpose of the afternoon was to update partners on what the LSP had been doing and to consider how the LSP could make, and communicate, progress with the Community Strategy in the future.

“Purpose and Vision”

Councillor Nigel Coltman, Leader of Lewes District Council, gave a presentation which explored the reasons for the LSP’s existence and how it had been established.

Local Strategic Partnerships had been set up in every district, borough and county in response to the Local Government Act 2000. The aim of that Act had been to strengthen links between public bodies and local people. As well as the formation of LSPs, it required the development of Community Strategies.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit of the ODPM had set out that the purpose of LSPs was to ensure that public services worked better and were delivered in a way that met the needs of local people and that ensured economic, social and physical regeneration was sustained in both prosperous and deprived areas.

LSPs were to achieve this by providing a single co-ordinating framework to prepare and implement a Community Strategy and to join up partners’ activities, enabling each to meet their own targets and to tackle cross-cutting issues more effectively.

The Wealden LSP comprised representatives from 16 Partner organisations from the public, business and voluntary sectors. During the first 18 months, Wealden District Council had led the LSP but had handed the Chairmanship over to the Chief executive of South Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust in January 2003. In future years it was expected that the Chairmanship would rotate between the sectors to reflect and retain the buy-in from the Partners.

Councillor Coltman explained that, although not all groups could be represented directly on the LSP itself, the Partnership wanted to build a “family” of wider partnerships to ensure involvement and consultation was open to all.

Contrary to some impressions, LSPs, unless they were in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, did not attract any financial support from Government. Wealden District Council had provided administrative support since 2001 but the time was

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approaching when the LSP needed to undertake some projects of its own, which were beyond current capacity. Therefore it was very exciting that, from April 2004, the County and District Council had agreed to use funds raised from the rise in Second Homes Council Tax to help support the work of the LSP. In answer to a question he confirmed that other Partners on the LSP would be approached to request contributions, either financial or in kind, to help support the long-term future of the LSP. Part of the money would be used to fund a full-time co-ordinator for the LSP who could help the LSP to undertake continued consultation, parish plan development and one-off projects to improve quality of life in the District. The LSP had agreed that that work would not be able to be progressed adequately with the current level of support, which consisted of several District Council Officers' time, assigned on an ad hoc basis, as required, in addition to their usual duties. The proposed full-time, dedicated, post would enable continuity and the driving forward of significant schemes.

Councillor Coltman concluded by re-iterating that the value of the LSP lay in improving relationships with, and between, local communities, public bodies, businesses and voluntary and community bodies. He assured the participants that the Wealden LSP was a dynamic body of decision-makers ready to work with them to make a real difference to the District in the long-term.

“How far have we come?”

Councillor Tim Sparrow, representative of the Sussex Association of Local Councils on the LSP, gave a presentation which updated participants on past, current and future work of the LSP.

It was explained that the Wealden LSP had been established in 2001 and in the first few months had developed good working relationships and had improved links between the partner organisations. The Partners had, in 2002, undertaken an innovative and successful consultation exercise with a large cross-section of the Wealden population. The consultation had been made possible by the hard work of many local Councillors who went out to meet people in their own homes and talk about what was wanted to improve quality of life in the District in the future. The consultation method had won a Local Government Chronicle Award and a National Grid Award of £10,000. The latter prize had recently been distributed by the LSP through a grant scheme for local Parishes wishing to undertake Parish Plans.

The results of that initial consultation had shown that over 86% of respondents were fairly or very satisfied with living in the District. The most important features for making somewhere a good place to live had emerged as a clean and healthy environment and safety from crime. The things which most needed improvement in the District were being able to get to places easily and safely and safety from crime. These results had been used to draw up a Community Strategy, a 15 year vision, categorised into eight Themes, for improving quality of life in the District over a 15 year period. That Strategy had been published in December 2002.

During 2003, the Partners had drawn together details of all the activities being undertaken in the District by themselves and wider partners which would help to meet the aspirations set out in the Community Strategy. These were set out in Action Plans for each Community Strategy Theme. Eight members of the LSP

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had each agreed to act as a Champion for one of the Themes, overseeing the Action Plans. In addition, local partnerships had been identified, or newly established, to assist the Theme Champions progress the objectives in the Themes. (A graphical representation of the delivery framework is appended). The Theme Champions each report back to the LSP on progress once a year.

A few examples of recent progress by the LSP and its Partners were:

- The awarding of Parish Plan Grants to almost half the Parishes in Wealden:
- The completion of the Uckfield emergency flood plan
- A Pollution Prevention Campaign carried out on the Hackhurst Industrial Estate, Lower Dicker
- A litter clearance project along the A22
- Environmental enhancements and improvements carried out to pedestrian facilities in Crowborough Town Centre
- Establishment of a Public Private Partnership to deliver 100% broadband coverage in East Sussex

A "Visioning" Workshop had been held in January 2004 to consider how the LSP could move forward in its work to achieve the objectives set out in the 15-year Community Strategy. At that Workshop it had been concluded that the LSP needed to:

- Identify gaps in provision and undertake projects that would add-value to the work already being carried out, without duplication of effort;
- Identify useful indicators to keep track of progress; and
- Find ways of keeping the public and wider partners informed and involved.

The Wider Partners were reminded that the LSP did not expect to be able to achieve all the Community Strategy Objectives without their help. It was hoped that the experience of the Wider Partners would help the LSP to communicate better, add value to the work of all partners and to keep on track.

In answer to a question, Cllr Sparrow expressed his opinion that, without the LSP, each individual Partner would have continued with their own programme of work, with possible duplications of effort and gaps in service provision. The benefits of working together through the LSP were that the Partners could pool resources and work towards the same objectives, resulting in sharper, more joined-up delivery.

It was confirmed that the LSP had no powers to enforce action but that it was a co-operative, influencing body that could help co-ordinate the actions of its many Partners.

Workshop 1: How can the LSP best communicate with, and involve, local residents, businesses and groups?"

Groups 1 and 2 considered how the LSP could effectively communicate with its Partners and the public. It was concluded that:

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- The LSP needs to be clear about what it is communicating, which should be progress towards the objectives in the Community Strategy.
- Newsletters and an interactive website were seen as important communication tools.
- The Parish Councils were an important and effective communication network which should be utilised by the LSP.
- Each Partner organisation's existing methods and chains of communication were also useful tools.

Workshop 2: How can the LSP add value to the work already being undertaken in Wealden to improve life for residents, workers and visitors?

Groups 3 and 4 considered how the LSP could add value to the existing work of Partners. It was recognised that:

- There was a clear link between added value and communication as communication itself added value by increasing understanding and access.
- Sharing information, good practice and resources would add value for each of the Partner organisations.
- Engagement with young people was an area that should be developed for each of the Themes.
- The LSP could take on a few visible projects that cross organisational boundaries.
- Consultation needed to be ongoing as priorities would change once particular issues had been addressed.

Fiona Henniker thanked the participants for attending and for the lively discussion. The outcomes of the day would be considered at the next meeting of the LSP so that the emerging ideas could be put into practice.

The meeting ended at 4.45pm

Enc. LSP Delivery Framework Diagram

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

Prosperity
(Theme Champion: Federation of Small Businesses)

Theme Partnership: Wealden Revitalisation Forum

Town Partnerships

Health & Social Care
(Theme Champion: Sussex Downs & Weald PCT)

Theme Partnership: Healthy Wealden Partnership

Housing
(Theme Champion: Downland Housing Group)

Theme Partnership: Wealden Housing Partnership

Environment
(Theme Champion: Environment Agency)

Theme Partnership: Rural Environment Group

Wealden Environment Theme Champion
Lewes Agenda 21
Rother Environment Group
Wildlife Groups
Utilities & Local Businesses
Conservation Groups
Rural Groups
Waste/Recycling Groups

Learning
(Theme Champion: Learning + Skills Council)

Theme Partnership: East Sussex Learning Partnership

Leisure
(Theme Champion: Churches Together in Sussex)

Theme Partnership: Cultural Partnership

Safety
(Theme Champion: Sussex Police)

Theme Partnership: Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership

Wealden Safety Theme Champions
Wealden District Council
East Sussex County Council
Sussex Probation Service
Sussex Downs & Weald PCT
Eastbourne Downs PCT

Transport
(Theme Champion: East Sussex County Council)

Theme Partnership: Wealden Transport Group

East Sussex County Council
Wealden District Council