

Note of Wealden Local Strategic Partnership meeting 17th September 2008, Heathfield Community Centre.

Present:

Ian Chisnall – Chair, Churches Together in Sussex
David Chaffey – Assistant Housing Services Director, Downland HA
Adam Chugg - Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services
Lisa Compton – PCT, Director of Patient and Public Engagement & Corporate Affairs
Cllr Pam Doodes – Leader, WDC
Kathy Fordham – NFU Representative
Cllr Linda Francis – Willingdon & Jevington Parish Councillor
Jeff Hart – Freedom Leisure, Managing Director
Neil Honnor – Sussex Police, Wealden Commander
Cllr William King - Maresfield Parish Council
Debby Matthews - South Downs CVS
Neal Robinson – East Sussex Fire and Rescue
Lisa Schrevel – Partnership Development Manager, East Sussex County Council
Richard Watson, PCT
Cllr David White – WDC Councillor
Cllr Chantal Wilson – WDC Councillor

In Attendance

Nigel Eveleigh – WDC, Planning Policy Manager
Alex White – WDC, Policy Assistant
Gill Cameron-Waller – WDC, Policy and Partnership Manager
Hana Ferguson - WDC, Clerical Assistant
Lucy Dixon-Thompson - LAA Engagement Officer, East Sussex County Council

Apologies:

Alison Horan - East Sussex County Council
Martin Small – South Downs Joint Committee
Charles Lant – WDC, Chief Executive
Ken Stevens – Federation of Small Businesses
Cllr Roy Galley – WDC Councillor
Joanna Hodgson – Environment Agency
Cllr Barrie Murray - Uckfield Town Council
Teresa Gittins – Action in Rural Sussex, Director of Policy
Marie Tomblin – Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services
Cllr Di Phillips - WDC Councillor

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed. There were no matters arising.

2. Health Profile

Lisa Compton presented the Wealden Health profile 2008. She explained that this is a snapshot based on high level indicators of deprivation and health and shows comparisons with the England average. Overall Wealden compares well except with regard to road traffic accidents. She stressed that these findings are based on high level figures - there are pockets of deprivation and poor health, particularly in rural areas, that the report does not address. Work is currently underway to refresh the 'Investing in Life' strategy - this will look at key areas where health outcomes can be improved and provide a focus down to GP practice level. A copy of the strategy will be sent to LSP members in due course.

In discussion the following points were made: The role of the LSP will be important - tackling the issues raised would require intervention in areas such as housing, education and lifestyle, which will necessitate partnership working. There are questions about the level of deprivation across and within wards, and the extent of common issues across particular groups rather than by geographical area. Whilst some of these concerns are being addressed it was agreed that more needed to be done to improve community profiles. Ian Chisnall asked that any further feedback be given to Lisa Compton, especially in response to data provided in the Investing in Life strategy.

3. CVS Infrastructure support

Adam Chugg and Debby Matthews gave a joint presentation on behalf of EAVS and SDCVS. In discussion the following points were made: It was felt that there is a good range of support within the district but some confusion arises over having two organisations. A common website could help to reduce this. Similar issues arise over who best to contact in the more outlying parts of the district where a natural link may be across county borders. It was agreed that clarification of roles and who to contact would help. Over time a more coherent message will help to develop more of a 'Wealden' feel. Overall it was felt that there had been a step change since WFVO folded and the position was much improved. However, as always, funding remains an ongoing issue.

4. Revised constitution

Ian Chisnall tabled a draft revision of the constitution. He explained that it was mostly a tidying up exercise to reflect changes over time. However, there were two main changes as follow: First, a proposal for a vice-chair and for the position to be filled by the Leader of Wealden District Council. This would provide additional support to the Chairman and also meet new government

guidance on increasing local authority engagement with LSP's. Secondly, following discussions with WDALC, it was felt appropriate to try and increase the involvement of local councils in the LSP. The proposed change was to include three representatives but with only one of these having voting rights.

Members felt it inappropriate to single out local councils in this way - no other member of the LSP has restricted rights - and instead asked that each of the three local council representatives be a full member of the LSP. It was also felt that there should be provision for including a representative of 'infrastructure' services, such as water supply or sewerage - this was important in connection with the LDF and would help ensure improved contemplation of planning issues.

There was some discussion about the need to try and include representatives from large employers - such as supermarkets - who can have a sizable impact on local services. However, members felt that it would be difficult to identify a single representative. It was pointed out that East Sussex County Council is in the process of setting up a business board for East Sussex - the first meeting of this board will be on 8th October - feedback in light of that meeting may help to clarify this issue.

The number of CVS representatives was raised. There are two at present and it would be helpful to have greater involvement. However, there is a question over finding people willing to participate. SDCVS and EAVS are holding a meeting on 20th November, they will raise the issue there.

There is a need to identify members who are prepared to act as theme champions, particularly to help take forward work on an action plan (see item 5 below). The Learning, Cultural, and Transport themes had no obvious champion - members were asked to consider who should cover each of the themes and let either Gill Cameron-Waller or Ian Chisnall know.

Action: All members

It was agreed that the draft constitution would be rewritten to reflect the changes discussed, along with some minor drafting points. A revised version will be tabled at the next meeting on 18th November.

Action: Gill Cameron-Waller

5. SCS Action planning

Alex White set out proposals for developing an action plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy. There was a clear need to prepare an action plan if the LSP is to keep track of work underway to achieve the strategy and ensure progress towards the overall aims is maintained. It would, however, be an onerous task to try and draw up such a plan collectively. The suggestion was to engage a consultant to work with theme champions to prepare a draft plan

which could then be considered by the LSP as a whole. The intention is to agree a 3-year action plan by March 2009 and feed in to the process of developing a county-wide plan alongside this.

A template setting out all the aims contained in the SCS was circulated. Members were asked, as a first step, to consider what work is already underway and identify any areas not covered against each of the aims. To minimise the burden on partners this should be a fairly high level gap analysis. The completed templates should provide helpful background for a consultant to take work forward and develop a draft plan.

In discussion it was pointed out that there needs to be a balance struck between: simply listing what partners are already doing individually as part of their day-to-day work; and identifying discreet targets or areas of work relevant to the SCS that are being or could be achieved through working in partnership. Alongside this it was felt important to bear in mind that there will be no additional capacity or resources to take forward any action plan - new targets and/or areas of new work would be particularly challenging.

The LSP agreed with the broad thrust of the proposals and to appoint a consultant to develop the action plan.

Action: Gill Cameron-Waller

6. Progress through Partnership

Gill Cameron-Waller explained that Progress through Partnership (PtP) is again to make grants available to all LSPs in the region. £4000 will be offered to each LSP, subject to completion of a self assessment form. The LSP had been granted £6000 by PtP last year - of this £2000 had been pooled with the other East Sussex LSPs. This year it was suggested that the LSP pool £1000 with the balance to be spent on specific themed events. Self assessment forms and the request for funding need to be completed by 31st October.

Ian Chisnall reminded members that last year the self assessment had been completed by the LSP as a whole. He suggested that this time a few volunteers meet in mid-October to run through the forms and firm up the funding request. In the meantime the self assessment forms would be again circulated to all members together with a request for volunteers and a selection of dates.

Action: Gill Cameron-Waller

7. Rural Forum for the South East

Ian Chisnall explained that the Rural Forum for the South East has been established to provide a voice for local rural stakeholders on environmental, social and economic issues. The forum will provide information and

intelligence to the new South East Rural Board to help in its policy and delivery. These bodies had developed out of the GOSE initiated South East Rural Partnership. The partnership has now merged with the SEEDA Rural Advisory Committee to form the Rural Board. There will be two local authority seats on the Rural Board, one county and one district, together with a representative from SEERA. It has been agreed that New Forest and Wealden will take turns as the district representative. Pam Dodes has agreed to take the first two year stint on behalf of Wealden District Council.

The LSP has been invited to send a representative to the Rural Forum - the forum will meet twice each year. Members were asked to consider if they would be willing to take on this role and to let Gill Cameron-Waller know accordingly. Officer support will be available for the role.

Action: All members

8. Comprehensive Area Assessment

Gill Cameron-Waller advised that Sandra Prail - the Audit Commission lead on CAA for East Sussex - had agreed to give a presentation to all the East Sussex LSPs to help raise awareness and understanding of the new inspection arrangements. Wealden District Council had offered to host the event which will take place on Monday 27th October. Letters of invitation have been sent out to members. Ian Chisnall asked that members come along if interested and/or pass the details on to others.

9. Coordination with other East Sussex LSPs

Ian Chisnall reminded members that the LSP chairs meet on a regular basis to discuss common issues. He informed members that the current arrangements are being reviewed to consider how best to improve joint working practices, better share information and improve integration across all six LSPs. He will provide further updates as details become clear.

10. Meeting dates 2009

The schedule of dates for 2009 was agreed. Special events were included at this stage to ensure some dates are secured in diaries.

11. AOB

Wealden District Council has recently published a Service Guide, copies were made available.

12. Next meeting

The next meeting of the LSP will be at **10am on Tuesday 18th November at Heathfield Community Centre.**