

The Community Strategy



What is a Community Strategy?

The Local Government Act 2000 places on principal local authorities a duty to prepare 'Community Strategies' for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.

The Community Strategy will ensure that the various bodies who provide services to the public:

- Are better co-ordinated
- Are responsive to the needs and concerns of local communities
- Are delivered in the ways that suit people who depend upon them, and
- Take account of the needs of future generations.

The Wealden Community Strategy was published in 2002 and covers a notional 15 year period until 2017

How is a Community Strategy delivered?

A Community Strategy is delivered through partnership working. Public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations all have a part to play in improving the quality of life. These organisations group together under one umbrella to form a **Local Strategic Partnership** or **LSP**.

There are 16 members of the Wealden LSP and each one represents a key agency or organisation with a remit in the Wealden District. Eight of the members also act as theme champions for each of the eight theme partnerships:

- **Housing**
- **Safer Wealden**
- **Access/Transport**
- **Leisure**
- **Prosperity**
- **Learning and Skills**
- **Health and Social Care**
- **Environment**

In addition to these themes the LSP has an overall objective to consider equalities, social inclusion, rural issues, sustainability and the needs and aspirations of the young and the elderly across all the main theme partnerships.

The theme groups include representatives from a wide variety of agencies and organisations operating in the Wealden District with an interest in that particular area of activity. They aim to meet approximately four to five times a year and a number of these groups welcome new members and are keen to establish links with community partnerships.

Each theme group has an action plan listing the main objectives and how it intends to address these. The actions plans are reviewed on a regular basis and include:

- Progress to date
- Key priorities for the future
- Challenges and opportunities for new ways of working with other theme partners.

Communities involved in preparing or implementing village, parish and town action plans may find the fact sheets and key contacts a helpful starting point. They have been prepared on a theme basis and offer a number of prompts which interpret the community strategy at a local level.

See our website for further details:

www.wealdencommunitystrategy.co.uk

The Local Strategic Partnership is responsible for ensuring the delivery of the Community Strategy by influencing partner organisations in order to progress the action plans developed by each of the theme groups.

There are no prescribed rules or guidance imposed from above, however, the representatives of the member organisations must have the authority to speak for their organisation, to sign up to the long term vision and to commit resources to implementing the action plan, where this is relevant and appropriate.

Day to day organisation is outlined in the constitution which can be viewed on the website.



What is a Parish or Market Town Action Plan?

The village, parish or town action plan process is a means by which a community can voice their opinions on what actions they wish to see taken in their local area in the future. When the plan is completed it may highlight actions that can be taken by community members, be used to influence councils and service providers, and act as justification of need when applying for funding.

Making the Link between the Community Action Plan and the LSP

The Local Strategic Partnership has agreed to consider village, parish or town action plans which have been prepared on the basis of extensive community consultation, are holistic and have the full support of the Parish or Town Council.

Village, parish and town action plans can take a variety of forms according to the needs and wishes of each area. However, in order to facilitate dialogue with the statutory agencies and service providers there is a need to summarise the key priorities or actions so that the LSP can relate to them according to their own areas of responsibility with the Community Strategy ie, the eight themes – Housing, Safety, Access / Transport, Leisure, Prosperity, Learning, Health and Social Care, Environment.

Wealden LSP

Local Strategic Partnership

Proposals can then be looked at by the relevant theme partnerships who will make recommendations as to the level of support which can be provided, if any.

The LSP recognises that the relationship between the LSP members and the community is a two way process which demands commitment and respect on both sides.

Opportunities exist for both the community and the statutory agencies to help each other deliver their aims and objectives, and to some extent this may involve trade-offs and compromise. The community action plan should not be prepared in a vacuum. The vision must be realistic and take account of statutory requirements. In return, a level of support and investment will be provided that will enable communities to work towards fulfilling their aspirations.

A process is required to ensure this happens and the following table suggests one way of achieving this:

CATEGORY A Community Projects	LSP Response
<p>Locally managed or implemented. Provides activity in line with the Community Strategy but does not necessarily require input from LSP members to achieve outputs.</p>	<p>Supports ideas which complement aims and objectives of the community strategy. Strengthens case for activity at community level. Used to add weight to funding applications where appropriate.</p>
CATEGORY B Community Projects	LSP Response
<p>Initiative which requires process or policy changes at operational level on behalf of statutory agencies/service providers</p>	<p>LSP Members offer professional support and advice where resources allow. Consider changes in own activity to be more responsive to community need, however they must take account of resources and competing demands. Explains to community what can and can't be done and reasons why.</p>
CATEGORY C Community Projects	LSP Response
<p>Larger projects which are likely to involve capital investment and / or infrastructure on behalf of statutory agencies and may take place over the longer term Tends to fall outside the remit of the local community but has significant impact on the locality</p>	<p>LSP considers provision of funding and/or making significant changes to infrastructure in order to meet community objectives. Likely to be linked to overall strategy for a wider area. Agrees to work in partnership where activity affects the local community. Explains to community what can and can't be done and reasons why.</p>

**If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this process please contact
LSP Co-ordinator Caroline Adcock Tel 01892 602743 E-mail isp@wealden.gov.uk**

Local communities have expressed a clear need for the statutory agencies and service providers to recognise their action plans and take on board the proposals in a pro-active and fully integrated manner. It is hoped that the process outlined overleaf will enable this.

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this process, please contact the LSP Co-ordinator,

Caroline Adcock

Tel: 01892 602743

E-mail: lsp@wealden.gov.uk

Information relating to the LSP, its theme groups and the community strategy can be viewed on our website. Summaries of village, town and parish action plans which have prioritised their activities in line with the Wealden Community Strategy will be posted as and when they become available.

(www.wealdencommunitystrategy.co.uk)

In order to facilitate realistic planning and embody best practice, the LSP is funding **Action in rural Sussex** to provide mentoring, support and guidance to communities undertaking village and parish action plans.

If your community is not yet underway with its action plan, or you are not aware of the support available from Action in rural Sussex, then please contact:

Ieuan Sherwood, tel. 01273 405448,

E-mail: ieuan.sherwood@ruralsussex.org.uk

The Action in rural Sussex website (www.ruralsussex.org.uk) contains case study examples, guidance sheets on particular issues and examples of completed action plans.

Professional advice and guidance on specific areas of project activity may be available from members of the Local Strategic Partnership.



Funding Opportunities

Parish Plans Grant

Wealden LSP Fund has set aside a limited pot of money to enable communities wishing to carry out action plans.

For further details please contact:

LSP Co-ordinator

Caroline Adcock

Tel: 01892 602743

E-mail: lsp@wealden.gov.uk

Project Grants

There are various sources of funding to assist project delivery including the Wealden District Council Community Fund and the East Sussex Strategic Partnership **Making a Difference** Grants programme.

Wealden Federation of Voluntary

Organisations has a funding advice and support worker who provides an outreach service to voluntary and community groups in Wealden. This support includes finding appropriate funding, help with completing funding applications as well as associated organisational development (business planning, constitutions etc).

Contact **Karl Parks**

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