

**Notes of Wealden Local Strategic Partnership Meeting - 11 September 2007**  
**held at East Hailsham Community Centre**

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**Present**

Ian Chisnall	Churches Together In Sussex - Chair
Lisa Compton	East Sussex Downs & Weald PCT
Richard Watson	East Sussex Downs & Weald PCT
Pam Doodes	Leader, Wealden DC
Chantal Wilson	Member, Wealden DC
David White	Member, Wealden DC
Mark O'Brien	ESFRS
Neil Honnor	Sussex Police
Martin Small	South Downs Joint Committee
Jeff Hart	Freedom Leisure

**In attendance**

Charles Lant	Wealden DC, Chief Executive
David Palmer	Wealden DC, Head, Policy & Review
Paul Barker	Wealden DC, Conservation Officer
Caroline Adcock	Wealden DC, LSP – LDF Liaison
Jeremy Leach	Wealden DC, Public Health Development Manager
Lesley Goble	Eastbourne Association of Voluntary Services
Gill Cameron-Waller	Wealden DC, Policy & Partnerships Manager

**Apologies**

Teresa Gittins	AIRS
Paul Smith	Environment Agency
Kathy Fordham	NFU
Karen Crozier	Community Network
David Chaffey	Affinity Sutton
Alison Horan	ESCC
Trevor Leggo	Sussex Association of Local Councils
Philip Ayers	Rural Transport Partnership
Peter Minshull	Highways Agency
Keith Whitehead	Member - Wealden DC

Gill CW advised that Philip Ayers would no longer be attending the LSP Board as his role with the Rural Transport Partnership is ending. The Board asked to record its thanks to Philip for his contribution particularly in the area of community transport and bio-fuels, and wishes him well in his future consultancy career.

**Minutes – matters arising**

Correction: Community Sport Network (p3, para 3, l6) should read ‘...the PCT is about to appoint a Physical Activity Co-ordinator.’

**PCT Strategic Commissioning Plan**

Lisa presented the PCT's Strategic Commissioning Plan, branded 'Making Connections' by the Strategic Health Authority (SHA). Its scope extends along the south east coast, well beyond the boundaries of the East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT. The existing LDP and ISIP have not been very effectively linked in, so the objective of 'Making Connections' is to pull the elements of the Strategic Development Plan together in order to meet the needs identified by the Public Health Needs Assessment in a more streamlined way. Public

feedback and satisfaction has been used to guide service provision in the past, but the important change now is using this information in a more cohesive way across the board. The timescale for the process has been very tight with the first information available only in June and a first draft timetabled for 28th September. This means that there has been no opportunity for consultation at this stage, apart from a very brief look at vision and values in early July. The work is therefore initially based on existing statistics and information which has been out to consultation through the patient and public involvement (PPI) process. In addition to service provision, (needs assessment, strategies and targets) the commissioning plan looks at 'enablers' – Finance, Workforce, Information Management & Technology and Estates – which underpin service delivery, successful implementation of the various strategies and achievement of targets.

There will be wider consultation between October and Christmas by a variety of means, including a joint stakeholder event at locality level (districts / boroughs) leading to the production of a Patient Prospectus by the end of March 2008.

Following questions about the specific health interests of people in Wealden, and disparities at very local, neighbourhood level, Lisa offered to ensure partners are updated at the next Board meeting.

#### **Local Development Framework - update**

Cllr White summarised the current position on the LDF, noting the very high response to the Issues and Options consultation (over 11,000 representations). He explained that the results of the Examination in Public (EiP) of the draft South East Plan indicated that there would be an increase in housing numbers to be delivered in Wealden by 2026 (9600 rather than 8000).

However, these proposed numbers are not as high as had been feared, although the impact would be significantly more for Wealden than for any of the other districts or boroughs in East Sussex. As the original figure was below that needed to meet identified housing need, the opportunity to build more houses is welcome, but the additional pressures on infrastructure will be very difficult to resolve.

It remains to be seen whether the Secretary of State will further increase the housing delivery requirement in line with the recommendations of the Barker report - 46k houses in the South East as opposed to 32k, and if so, whether the distribution methodology would remain the same. Both Polegate and Uckfield are mentioned by name in the South East Plan, but both these towns have significant practical obstacles to high levels of new development.

Despite these continuing uncertainties, and ongoing pressure from GOSE to maintain progress against the LDF timetable, Cllr White emphasised that the LSP's contributions to the LDF process are highly valued and remain entirely valid.

#### **Local Development Framework – Design Guide consultation**

Paul Barker gave an informative, illustrated overview of the draft Design Guide which details the specific elements of Wealden's distinctive architectural features. The guide will assist planners, developers and residents understand the District's visual character, and enable them to contribute effectively to consolidating and developing a high quality environment which will in turn enhance residents' quality of life.

Caroline emphasised that the Planning Policy team are keen to receive partners' views on the Design Guide during the consultation period which closes on 15th October. Comments can be made online through the [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk) or direct to Caroline (caroline.adcock@wealden.gov.uk). Partners were also invited to a consultation event on 27th September at 18:00 in the Ashford Room, Uckfield Civic Centre.

Martin Small (South Downs Joint Committee) expressed his pleasure at the publication of the Design Guide. As a consultee on many Wealden planning applications, he will refer to the guide to inform his responses. Richard Watson emphasised the important health and safety benefits which can be achieved by ensuring that back gardens and green space are designed into development plans.

### **LSP Achievement**

Caroline reminded the Board that, in a very real, financial, sense, the LSP has been responsible for the development of the Design Guide. The idea originated as a result of analysis of parish plans developed through an LSP project delivered by Action in Rural Sussex. The desire to retain distinctive local character in villages throughout Wealden was a recurring theme, and the Design Guide provides a practical tool for encouraging sympathetic development.

### **LSP Finance**

David Palmer presented the current budget position to the Board. He confirmed the situation that as of 2008 / 09 there are no guarantees of further funding from any of the partners, although Wealden District Council hopes to be able to maintain its current levels of funding. This will depend on the outcomes of their current financial review. Whatever those outcomes are, this budget ensures that the LSP continues to be viable until the end of March 2011, and potentially beyond that. A key objective is to ensure a sustainable budget for the continued existence of the LSP whilst respecting the basis on which funding was provided. Therefore, the budget:

- identifies £6681 to be spent on community safety-related activity by the end of this financial year
- proposes reserves to be carried forward annually
- releases some resource for small scale partnership activity over the next three years

A separate amount of £1200 is available for community leadership-related expenditure.

Current commitments mean that there is potentially £8319 available for projects this year, over and above the £6681 for Community Safety.

Given the relatively short period until the end of this financial year, Board members were asked to bring ideas forward to Ian and / or Gill before the next meeting so that they can be summarised and considered at that meeting.

As the amounts involved are relatively small, there will not be a complex or bureaucratic bidding process. However, a simple template will be developed to collect the key elements of proposals, the outcomes envisaged and essential criteria will include partnership working and links to the Wealden Community Strategy.

**Action:** Gill CW template & criteria

### **Safer Wealden Partnership**

Jeremy Leach reported on the current situation regarding the Safer Wealden Partnership. This is the delivery arm for the Community Safety theme of the Community Strategy, which is one of the highest priorities in the District. It is also Wealden District Council's statutory Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). Mark O'Brien and Neil Honnor are Chair and Deputy Chair respectively. Pam Doodles is also a former Chair, so there are strong links with the LSP Board.

Central Government has reviewed CDRP structures and funding, and this has led to changes which are causing difficulties at District level – primarily in terms of finance, which is now distributed through the County-level CDRP, causing additional pressures in protecting expenditure in Wealden. Government also imposed unforeseen mid-year budget cuts and

money which currently comes from the Police Basic Command Unit is unlikely to continue as a result of changes to Police funding. Essentially, the budget will fall from £158,994 to £68,426.

In practical terms, a large proportion of the budget provides two members of staff who have been extremely proactive in co-ordinating activities and leveraging in other resources. Painful decisions have had to be taken and one member of staff will be made redundant. As other agencies in the partnership are also working at full capacity, there is no slack in the system to make up for the losses. This will therefore inevitably have a detrimental effect on the productivity of the partnership and its ability to deliver against Wealden's expectations for improved community safety.

The forthcoming renegotiation of the Local Area Agreement is an important opportunity to ensure that Wealden LSP's priorities for community safety are included, and that partners to the LAA will be required to deliver against them. Realistically, Central Government focuses on urban issues, and a rural district such as Wealden, with low crime levels is unlikely to achieve significant funding in comparison with urban areas with higher concentrations of crime. Unfortunately this approach does not take account of the impact of crime on the individual, or on people's perceptions of crime which seem not to have a direct correlation with actual crime levels.

### **Wealden Youth Website**

When significant funds were available for LSP-funded projects through Second Homes money, the Board supported the creation of a dedicated website for young people in Wealden which was launched in April 2006. Wealden young people have been involved in its design and content, which centres around the five key outcomes of the *Every Child Matters* agenda: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and building a future. These themes clearly also relate to the Community Strategy, but with a specific emphasis on children and young people.

The site has been a great success, with over 5000 unique visitors who stay on the site for an average of five minutes, visiting an average of 5.4 pages in that time. The PCT and other public agencies use the site as a method of communicating with young people in Wealden. The site is overseen by an advisory group of 15 young people from all over the District aged between 12 and 18.

Web design is a fast-moving area, and young people have high expectations of the sites they visit. The advice of the advisory panel is that it is high time for a re-vamp and the Council is willing to organise a competition for new designs open to young people who live, work or study in the District. As the site is structured in three age groups, the competition will operate in similar sections. However, the search is on for funding for prizes and to implement the new design, which is estimated to cost some £7600.

### **East Sussex Chairs' and Co-ordinators' Group**

The group met on 6th September and two key items on the agenda were

- the East Sussex Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy which is being progressed by the Co-ordinators and will be circulated to all partners for comment in due course. The draft will also go out to wider consultation between 20th November and 12th February – a 12 week period to comply with the East Sussex COMPACT.
- and LSP Capacity Building following on from the self-assessment undertaken by each of the East Sussex LSP Boards earlier in the year. It was agreed that each LSP would pool £2000 of its £6000 allocation, retaining £4000 for development of the local LSP. The headline topics across the board in the county are Governance, Performance Management and Delivery & Impact.

**AOB**

Partners were reminded of East Sussex County Council's *Time of Our Lives* Consultation seeking views on improving older people's quality of life in the county which ends on 31st October 2007.

It was agreed that forward dates for LSP Board Meetings would be circulated before the next Board meeting.

**Action:** Gill CW

**Next meeting**

Tuesday 13th November 10am at Heathfield Community Centre.