

MEETING OF UTTLESFORD FUTURES BOARD held at 2.00 pm at the COUNCIL OFFICES SAFFRON WALDEN on 21 JANUARY 2009

Present:- Councillor Howard Rolfe (UDC)
Councillors Catherine Dean, Mark Lemon, Jan Menell (UDC)
Councillor Elizabeth Bellingham – Smith (Transport Group), Councillor Alan Dean (Economic Development Group), John Mitchell (Chief Executive, UDC)
Gaynor Bradley (Community Partnerships Manager UDC), Kerry Vinton (Assistant to Community Partnerships Manager). Graham Fletcher (Federation of Small Businesses), Paul Garland (Sustainable Uttlesford), Councillor Eric Hicks and Sue Sumner (CVSU), Superintendent Steve Robinson (Essex Police), Helen Dear (NHS West Essex) Olly Holford (Essex Fire and Rescue Service) and Hamish McIlwrick (UALC)

F38 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K L Eden, Toni Coles, Yvette Witten and Ray Gooding.

F39 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2008 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to including Councillor Hicks in the list of those present.

The Chairman said that this meeting had been arranged primarily to agree the LAA/ PRG projects. However it appeared that there had been some confusion and not all members had been aware of this. Alan Dean had circulated an email highlighting a number of outstanding issues that were not on the agenda.

It was confirmed that the Empowerment White Paper, reports from the working groups and the Compact would be items for the next meeting of the Board. The Peer Challenge would be considered at the subsequent meeting.

Preparation of the training plan for LSP members had been delayed due to staff sickness but would be circulated shortly.

The Chairman asked for future meetings to produce a list of action points in addition to the minutes.

F40 LAA PRG PROJECTS UPDATE

The Board was informed that ECC had committed £263,671 of funding towards the projects. This meant that there was a shortfall of £162,329 on the total project costs. All of the projects had been passed by ECC, although there had been certain caveats in respect of the juice bar and the business survey.

The Board was now to decide on which projects the money should be spent. It was confirmed that there was some flexibility to move the money around within the final amount and no further approvals were now required.

The group had previously put in a bid in excess of £400,000. Following the announcement of the £260,000 officers had been encouraged to bid for more funds but it was now clear that there was no further money being made available from central Government. There was some concern that the whole process had resulted in an unnecessary amount work for the officers involved. Some clarification on the format for next year's grant allocation would be useful.

The Project Board then looked at the projects in details. All of the projects had been assessed and the score sheets were circulated. It was noted that all the projects had obtained fairly similar scores.

The Board decided to take as a basis the original list of projects that had been already been well discussed and justified.

	Project	Amount requested
UTT1	Access to Services	£20,000
UTT2	Help	£40,000
UTT5	Purchase of monocams	£10,000
UTT8	Computer game	£10,000
UTT9	Juice Bar	£58,000
UTT10	Engage plus	£70,000
UTT13	Industrial Estate project	£13,000

Members of the Board made comments on the following projects.

Juice bar

There was general support for this scheme as it would provide a visible service in the south of the district where facilities for young people were lacking. However, there were now problems with the availability of the premises and it seemed very unlikely that the project would be in place for an April start date. On that basis it did not seem appropriate to include it in the list of projects. Members were informed that there was some funding for the project from Essex County Council to 2010. The Board confirmed that it would look on the project favourably in the future.

Engage Plus

The Board was aware of the merits of this scheme but drew attention to the large numbers of young people that were to be targeted. It was felt that these numbers could be reduced and the amount allocated for the project scaled down to £50,000.

Monocams

Helen Dear questioned the necessity of this project as this district was a very low crime area. However other members argued that this scheme offered good value for a small amount of money. It would help to address fear of crime and road safety issues which were a high priority areas in the District.

The Board then considered the four additional projects.

	Project	Amount requested
UTT3	Public Art	£20,000
UTT4	Family intervention project	£50,000
UTT11	Business Survey	£45,000
UTT12	Home Audits	£90,000

Family Intervention Project

The purpose of this project was to support families at risk of eviction due to anti social behaviour. This would involve a specially trained officer working in the home. In support Members said that anti-social behaviour had come out as a high priority in the recent community consultation. The Board wanted to understand how this scheme would add value as there was already work undertaken by other agencies in this area. Helen Dear said that this was a service for the whole family and could be targeted at specific local problems. It had worked well in other areas and had Police support, as early intervention could prevent their future involvement.

Public Art

The Board agreed that in the present economic climate it was difficult to justify support for this scheme, as it would only benefit Saffron Walden and had been very low on the list of public priorities.

Business Survey

The Economic Development Group wished to conduct a survey to understand the issues facing local businesses and thereby to determine the support that the Partnership could provide. Graham Fletcher said that there was currently no clear idea about the problems facing businesses in this area, so the group could not help with the various grants, expertise and funding that might be available. Essex County Council had questioned the amount requested for this exercise and had offered £5000 for a survey costing up to £10,000. The Futures Board had also agreed to give £5,000 toward the survey. The Chairman supported this project as he considered that the area of economic development was underdeveloped in the District. The survey had still to be put together and the working group was talking to other authorities about similar surveys that they had undertaken.

Home Audit

The aim of the project was to employ a “green doctor” to provide advice on environmental, security and safety measures to improve quality of life. Paul Garland said the money was required as start up costs to employ a person and the associated transport needs. It was hoped that the scheme would eventually become self financing. Some members questioned if this was realistic. He replied that this was a service that wasn't presently available but agreed that it was difficult to anticipate public interest. However, even if a will to move forward wasn't demonstrated residents would still have benefited from the project over the two years.

It was pointed out that the fire service already carried out free fire safety audits, and there were Housing Improvement grants available. Also there was the 'warm front' project and free advice from the energy companies so it was necessary to avoid duplication. Other members said that the issue of environmental measures and energy saving was a specialist area and the public were not aware of the possible benefits. The audits would focus on simple quick wins and homeowners would be pointed in the direction of experts and grants for more complicated issues. It was generally felt that at this early stage the project might not require the full amount that had been applied for.

On discussing these 4 projects further, the Board made the following recommendation

- Delete the £20,000 for Public Art School
- Reduce the business survey to £30,000 (+ the 5K from the LSP)
- Reduce for family intervention project to £45,000
- Reduce home audit to £43,000

AGREED that the funding for the projects be allocated as follows

	Project	Amount Awarded
UTT1	Access to Services	£20,000
UTT2	Help	£40,000
UTT5	Purchase of monocams	£10,000
UTT8	Computer game	£10,000
UTT9	Juice Bar	No award
UTT10	Engage plus	£50,000
UTT13	Industrial Estate project	£13,000
UTT3	Public Art	No award
UTT4	Family intervention project	£45,000
UTT11	Business Survey	£30,000
UTT12	Home Audits	£43,000
	Total	£261,000

F41 LSP PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER - UPDATE

It was reported that Interviews for the post of Partnership Officer were to take place shortly. The Chairman thanked Kerry Vinton for her help over the last few months.

F42 GROUP'S ACTION PLANS

This would be the main item for the next meeting. It was stressed that all Chairman should attend or send a substitute if they were unavailable.

F43 COMMUNICATIONS

The Board considered options for publicising the activities of the Partnership. There was now a dedicated page on the Council's website. Members discussed whether there should be greater public involvement in the meeting and whether the meetings should be held in public. It was generally felt that although public meetings might be appropriate for one off events, the presence of the press and public might make it difficult for members to speak openly and there were also confidentiality issues.

Sue Sumner said that the voluntary service would welcome more engagement in the working groups and asked for details of membership.

AGREED to circulate details of the membership of each working group to all members of the Board.

The Board said that once the projects bids had been agreed there would be something more substantive to report and that might be an appropriate time to hold another community conference.

AGREED that officer look to organise a further community conference at Chesterford Park.

F44 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Board considered a request for a member of the Housing Department to serve on the Board. Whilst it was agreed that housing was a very important issue, the District Council was already represented by the Chief Executive and it was important that the membership did not become too large. This did not prevent housing officers from being invited to any meeting to discuss specific issues.

Paul Garland thought it would be useful to review the overall strategy and direction of the Board and suggested revisiting some of the original documents.

F45 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 24 February at 1.30pm.

The arrangements for future meetings were discussed and it was agreed they should be held at 1.30pm and that it was not necessary for food to be provided.

Dates for 2009 were as follows

1 April 2009

24 June 2009

23 September 2009

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm.