

MEETING OF UTTLESFORD FUTURES BOARD held at 1.30 pm at the COUNCIL OFFICES SAFFRON WALDEN on 21 JULY 2010

Present:- Councillor Howard Rolfe – Chairman (UDC).
Councillors Christina Cant, Jan Menell, Alan Dean (Economic Development Group), Keith Eden (Transport Group) Eric Hicks (UCVS), John Mitchell (Chief Executive UDC) Gaynor Bradley (Community Partnerships Manager UDC), Kerry Vinton (Partnerships Officer UDC), Graham Fletcher (Federation of Small Businesses), Mike Jeffs (Sustainable Uttlesford), Ray Gooding (ECC), Hamish McIlwrick (UALC), Alyson Wilson (Essex Police), Alison Cowie (West Essex NHS), Lonica Varney (ECC) and Sue Sumner (UCVS).

F1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Yvette Wetton, Steven Robinson, Councillor Mark Lemon and Toni Coles.

F2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 21 April 2010 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments

F114 - Sue Sumner said that in relation to the UCVS database the minutes were inaccurate as a detailed report had already been prepared. She confirmed that the database was a resource for all partner organisations to use.

At minute F116 (vi) she said that the UCVS now used the 'Fundafinder' rather than the 'Grantfinder' programme. She also informed the group that she circulated a monthly e-bulletin on funding advice to the voluntary organisations

AGREED Sue Sumner to circulate

- i) The report on the UCVS database.
- ii) The monthly e-bulletin on funding advice.

At F114 Alison Cowie said that the minute did not reflect the detailed discussion the board had in relation to local partners' contributions to the LSP budget.

The minutes of the Futures Management Team on 29 June were circulated for information. A meeting of the LSP Chairs had been held recently, mainly discussing the issue of LSP funding.

AGREED that the minutes of the LSP chairs meeting be circulated to the Board members.

F3

BUSINESS ARISING

The following items were still outstanding from the action list.

i) Minute F114 – Budget and Funding update – LABGI funding

Councillor Dean said that he had been disappointed at the outcome of his request to the Environment Committee for the LABGI monies to be allocated to the Economic Development Group. The money had not been assigned to the LSP but it had been resolved that the allocation be made by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Futures Board. As he now had to go to the Chief Executive to request funding approval he felt that there was uncertainty as to whether projects would be able to proceed. The Chairman suggested that the Economic Working Group should test this process and come back to the Board if there was a problem. Councillor Hicks questioned whether there should be a procedure whereby the LSP approved funding for particular projects. The Chief Executive explained that the allocation of the LABGI funds was not part of the normal process and therefore did not need to come back to the Board.

ii) Minute F116 Working group update - CSP

Alison Cowie said that she would continue discussions with the Police and Steve Rhenius regarding the type of intelligence information that should be added to the LSP report.

iii) Minute F118 repeat victimisation and ASB

Alison Cowie said that numbers in relation to child protection cases were relatively small and she was wary of producing figures that might infer misleading conclusions. She would however look to produce some data for the next meeting.

iv) Minute F120 – Centre for local economic strategies

The presentation would now be heard at the October meeting of the Board.

F4

BUDGET AND FUNDING UPDATE

The Board received an update to the balance sheet for 2010/11. Many of the figures were uncertain due to the likely reduction in the Essex County Council funding. It was reported that remainder of £268,000 grant had been received on 7 June for the PRG projects, but the 2x £45k yearly funding for the LSP capacity building had not yet been received. Due to the cut in PRG funding ECC was looking at a 50% payback on the grant.

Following on from the discussion at the last meeting a letter had been sent to ECC expressing the Board's concern at the request and stating that it was not prepared to pay back any money as it had already allocated funds to ongoing

schemes. The costs involved with ceasing projects and potential redundancy would leave a limited amount of money to pay back in any event.

Until further details on funding were received it was difficult for the Board to make any decisions about future action. It might need to discuss what action to take if the yearly grant to the LSP was not forthcoming. To that end the chairman suggested holding a special meeting once the funding situation was clear.

Lonica Vanclay said that the Essex partnerships comprised a large number of organisations. There were many different pressures and priorities; ECC was trying to build up a picture of spending and commitments and hoped to make an announcement on 2 August.

Members of the Board said that there was still a role for partnership working, even without outside funding. They also pointed out that the LSP had existed before the PRG and the ECC grant and contributions had been made from the partner organisations.

It was clear that there was Government emphasis for local groups to work together, new initiatives like localism and the big society were being encouraged but there appeared to be no money behind them. Members were concerned that recent projects and initiatives had created an expectation for partner organisations and were concerned that the LSP did not lose momentum in this period of uncertainty.

AGREED

- 1 An extraordinary meeting be arranged to discuss the future of the LSP once the funding position was known.
- 2 A copy the Board's letter and the initial reply from the ECC be circulated to members of the Board.
- 3 The Board support the strong stand taken by LSP regarding the paying back of funds.

F5 PRG PROJECTS

Gaynor Bradley explained that the PRG projects that had been funded for year 1 would continue. ECC had asked the LSP to cease those projects that would have been funded in the 2nd year. The outcome of the funding review was now awaited before these could proceed.

AGREED that for the next meeting of the Board a full list of projects be circulated together with details of funding and progress to date.

F6

CONSULTATION REPORT ASSEMBLY UPDATES AND FOLLOW UP

The Board received a document that set out the main findings of the Local Strategic Partnership Consultation. Under each key theme in the strategy, the report set out the main findings of the consultation, anecdotal evidence and the priorities that the relevant working groups had decided to focus on in the current Sustainable Community Strategy. The Board commended the clear format of the report and hoped that it could be expanded in the future to include measurable outcomes.

A question was asked about the size of the consultation group and whether it was a representative sample upon which policy could be formulated.

In response to a request made at the last meeting, Mike Jeffs had produced a one page report, which aimed to draw together the inter relationship between the LSP consultation outcomes and the Uttlesford Futures Environment Working Group projects. The Board welcomed the template as a way of representing all the relevant information in a clear and concise way.

AGREED that the template be adopted by all the LSP working groups.

In relation to the detailed report the following issues were raised:

Councillor Dean understood that planning permission had recently been refused for solar panels on houses in the district. He asked that this issue been discussed with the Development Control section.

Councillor Menell referred to a recent Safer Healthier Communities meeting and informed the group of a seminar on 2 December concerning Drug and Alcohol in the District.

F7

THEME GROUPS UPDATE

In addition to the reports circulated with the agenda, updates were received on the activities of the following groups:-

i) West Essex Children's Trust Board

Lonica Varley reported that the Trust had now met about 4 times and was continuing to progress its priorities. It was taking a strategic view across West Essex, encouraging agencies to share information on the resources available and to work together toward common priorities. One particular theme was to engage with young people and the Board discussed ways to achieve this.

Ray Gooding reported that the Child Protection Service now had a new manager and action had been taken to improve performance. The back log had been cleared and staff were now working on current cases.

Councillor Menell reported progress on establishing the 3 children's centres in the district. The Stansted centre was up and running, the Dunmow centre had

started operating in June, rooms had been allocated at Fairycroft, Saffron Walden and this centre was expected to be operating by Christmas.

ii) Economic Development

Councillor Dean outlined the activities of the group. The business seminar would be taking place on 29 July. On 16 November there would be a show case event for a number of West Essex authorities concerning business promotion services. The Braintree Business Development Service had contacted the group about possible financial support for its work in helping small businesses in Braintree and Uttlesford.

The RDA would be abolished from March 2012 and the group was waiting for further details on the possible implications.

Ray Gooding mentioned the apprenticeship scheme that was funded by ECC. The scheme aimed to link businesses with the employees but there had been little activity in the Uttlesford area. He said that there were limited links with Stansted Airport and as it was the largest employer in the district he asked if action could be taken to address this.

AGREED that Councillor Dean liaise with Ray Gooding on this issue.

Graham Fletcher asked the Board to consider supporting initiatives that could assist small business to continue in the difficult financial climate, for example reduction or delay in paying business rates. It was pointed out that this type of initiative would have policy implications but it was suggested that he investigate further and report back to a future meeting.

iii) Environment Working Group

Mike Jeffs reported that the group had been active in 2 areas – carbon reduction and biodiversity. In relation to carbon reduction it was understood that a replacement officer for Jake Roos would have a new remit and the post might be shared with Braintree District Council. The carbon reduction plans had been delayed until the officer was in place but in the meantime members of the group would be contacted about their intentions regarding these plans.

AGREED

- 1 A meeting be arranged with the Chairman of the working group and the new officer as soon as possible after the post was filled.
- 2 The carbon reduction plans be considered at the October meeting of the Board.

In terms of biodiversity action was being taken to raise the profile, a report had been considered by the Environment Committee and the Chief Executive would be contacted about the actions in the 2007 agreement.

The special roadside verges project was progressing and links were being strengthened with the wildlife and farming groups. A new website had been set up (private initiative by Tony Morton) regarding biodiversity in the Uttlesford area and places to visit.

www.uttlesford-wildlife.org.uk

iv) Healthy Communities & Older People Working Group

Sue Sumner said that the group was concerned about the possible loss of funding for the access to services review, as this was a key part of its work. Progress was continuing in other areas, in particular the HELP project.

Councillor Menell reported that Audley End Station had agreed to keep the lift at the station open past 7pm, on a month's trial.

Sue Sumer said that at the Assembly, one of the main concerns had been access to affordable homes and asked where that issue appeared within the strategy.

AGREED officers to look into this.

v) Transport Working Group

The Transport Group was continuing to progress its action plans. It had recently updated its terms of reference and was active in replying to Government consultations on transport issues and taking an interest in major planning applications.

Councillor Eden said that action was progressing on the Audley End to Saffron Walden walk/bike routes. The station manager was now a member of the forum and the group would be funding the scoping of a practical plan.

Councillor Dean spoke about the lack of a regular and reliable bus service to Audley End station.

vi) CSP

Alison Cowie said that at the next meeting the group would consolidate its response to its own and the assembly consultation. Fear of crime was still a major area of work and an additional priority had been added with regard to reducing reoffending. It was noted that crime in the district was still very low and there were only 2 red performance indicators. Alyson Wilson said that these could partly be explained because of a more proactive response and by over reporting. The population was generally less tolerant of anti social behaviour.

Councillor Dean said that the Council's Scrutiny Committee was currently conducting a review of CCTV in the District and investigating whether it was good use of money.

AGREED Alison Wilson to provide relevant statistical information.

Councillor Dean asked whether mosquito alarms were deployed within the district and was advised that these were only present at Stansted Mountfitchet station.

F8 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Board received an updated report which set out progress on the recommendations from the Community Engagement Task and Finish group.

The Council's Communication Officer was currently developing a district council communication strategy and would be looking at a local strategic partnership strategy once this had been completed. The group emphasised the need for a bottom up approach to consultation and particularly the need to involve parish councils and the production of parish plans. It was noted that the cutting of the 10k Community Engagement funding would have an effect on activities in this area. Members said that in terms of a bottom up approach, links should also be developed with other community groups.

The chairman highlighted the following issues that were still ongoing

- Look at on line consultation and investigate links with Essex portal; and develop a locality filter
- Discussion with CAB for extending the outreach workers provision (village agents no longer an option)
- Develop use of citizen panels

To move the work forward the following actions were agreed

AGREED

- 1 Hamish McIlwrick to liaise with the Community Partnerships Officer regarding ideas for encouraging the production of parish plans.
- 2 Consider a permanent slot for the LSP in Uttlesford life.
- 3 In order to investigate the effectiveness of online communication– look at i) the numbers of hits on the LSP website and ii) the pages that are viewed.

F9 **COMMUNITY FORUMS**

At the forum meeting in May there had been a presentation from the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership. The meetings in October would be focusing on health, particularly the implications for local authorities and the LSP on the recently announced health strategy.

Gaynor Bradley asked for ideas for discussion at the meeting in March 2011. She reminded members that the forums were a two way communication vehicle and could have an important role in the localism agenda. That being

said, she appreciated the difficulty in engaging the public on issues that did not directly affect them, and recent forum meetings had been poorly attended.

Alison Cowie suggested that a future forum meeting could give examples of projects that the LSP had completed and could then ask the audience – are we adding value/ is this what we should be doing? What should we be doing? The meeting could then introduce Localism and the Big Society and have a discussion on where we go from here.

AGREED that Gaynor Bradley devise a programme for the forum meetings in March 2011 on the lines set out above.

F10 **WEST ESSEX PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

Gaynor Bradley reported on a recent meeting of the West Essex Partnership. The group was aware of the likely budget constraints but did discuss three areas for attention; Care pathway, bus services and Total Place. It would be in a better position to move forward in October when the funding situation was clearer, until then it would continue to work together to identify projects.

An example of what could be achieved by this kind of partnership working was the Future Jobs fund. This project had secured funding of £1m over 2 years and in the first year 96 young people had been involved in the scheme with a similar number expected in year 2. It had been successful in securing permanent employment for a number of young people.

F11 **NEXT MEETINGS**

The next scheduled meetings of the Board were;

Wednesday 20 October 2010

Thursday 27 January 2010.

An extraordinary meeting to consider the funding situation would be arranged in due course.

The meeting ended at 4.35pm