

BOARD MEETING OF THE SOUTH DERBYSHIRE
LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Held at Newton Park Hotel, Newton Solney
on 22nd July 2004 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Local Authority Sector

Frank McArdle (Chief Executive, South Derbyshire District Council), Evadne Robbins (Derbyshire Association of Local Councils), County Councillor W. Routledge (substitute), District Councillor Heather Wheeler, District Councillor Barrie Whyman, M.B.E. (Vice-Chair).

Other Public Sector

Chief Superintendent Tony Hurrell (Derbyshire Constabulary)(Chair) and Paul McGregor (Derbyshire Learning Partnership).

Private Sector

Susan Bell, O.B.E. (National Forest Company), Sharon Forton (Southern Derbyshire Chamber), John Oake (Sharpe's Pottery Heritage and Arts Trust) and George Tansley (Etete Limited).

Voluntary/Community Sector

Reverend Bob Hollins (Churches Together), Graeme Royall (South Derbyshire Citizens' Advice Bureau), Jo Smith (South Derbyshire CVS), Helena Stubbs (Derbyshire Rural Community Council) and Glenys Williams (Old Post Regeneration Association).

Also in Attendance

South Derbyshire District Council

Ian Reid (Deputy Chief Executive) and Debbie Cook (Democratic Services Officer).

Chimera Consulting

Adam Jeffrey.

LSP/11. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from County Councillor Geoff Carlile, District Councillor John Wilkins, Jeff Dolby (Environment Agency), Karen Jones (Trident Housing Association), Karen Bradley (Toyota UK), Graham Keddie (Nottingham East Midlands Airport), Jane Cox (Derbyshire County Council) and Maria Hallam (GOEM).

Ian Reid advised that an e-mail had been received from Jeff Dolby of the Environment Agency stating that he was finding it increasingly difficult to attend Meetings due to work commitments and accordingly wished to temporarily withdraw from the Board. The Environment Agency was currently restructuring its Partnership Team and would hopefully identify an individual who would be permanently in place to undertake Strategic Partnership issues in the future. It was agreed by the Meeting that there was a need to consider membership at a future Meeting. The Chair suggested that attendances be reviewed following a

full year's operation of the Partnership and that the Constitution be revisited at the Annual General Meeting later in the year.

LSP/12. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24th June 2004 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

LSP/13. **MATTERS ARISING**

Further to Minute No. LSP/3 (1), it was reported that Susan Bell and Ian Reid had agreed the wording for the key goals for a Sustainable Environment which was more 'outcome focussed'. Jo Smith referred to the key goals for Opportunities for All and advised that she was happy with the key goals if it was felt that equal opportunities was adequately reflected within them.

Under Minute No.LSP/3, it was agreed to write expressing disappointment that the Learning and Skills Council had not been represented at the Lifelong and Culture Working Group. The Chair agreed to action this matter accordingly.

Further to Minute No. LSP/6, the Meeting was advised that a response had been sent to the Chief Constable of Derbyshire Constabulary expressing support for his proposals with regard to CCTV issues. The Chair advised that the overall plan was to establish a monitoring centre for CCTV in Derbyshire.

Further to Minute No. LSP/7, Councillor Whyman queried the implications for the District Council in covering the associated administration costs linked with bids made to the Business Planning Group for DDEP funding. George Tansley referred to the cash flow implications for small community groups and suggested that the District Council's role would be to help manage the cash flow in such circumstances. An administration fee had been built into the proposals but some of the smaller organisations could have a cash-flow problem. Councillor Whyman reported that a recent Task Group had been advised that it could not write off the 17.5% VAT which had been a significant amount. Councillor Whyman wondered how "creative" organisations could be in the bidding process to prevent groups losing VAT accordingly. Glenys Williams advised that OPRA Ltd was VAT exempt but had been required to introduce a very complex system to comply with VAT regulations. Real expertise was needed in this area. The Chair advised that GOEM did not want such bureaucracy and wanted to see the bidding process more streamlined and a cost percentage of time spent on administration could be shown. Sharon Forton referred to the wider issue for organisations stating that any agency had issues with VAT. Susan Bell queried what level of lobbying should take place suggesting that the Regional Development Agency should take this matter up. It was agreed that the LSP could express concern on the issue of VAT and the Chair suggested the appropriate body to lobby would be GOEM. According, the Chair agreed to write to GOEM and Susan Bell requested that the letter also be sent to the Regional Development Agency.

Councillor Whyman referred to the monthly requirement for SSPs to report on financial achievements and stated that the RDA were quite insistent on their requirements. It had been agreed to submit an indicative profile on outputs etc. however the issue was not resolved and the SSP were to revisit this matter suggesting an exemption profile whereby the SSP would only report if targets were not met. He suggested that initial concerns regarding the bidding process and VAT related matters should be submitted to DDEP before forwarding them to

GOEM and the RDA. The Chair expressed concern that some bodies did not have links with DDEP but Councillor Whyman felt that it was courteous as an accountable body to report initially directly to the funding body. Jo Smith advised the Meeting that there was a need for advice on VAT to be given to groups and Ian Reid reported that there were mechanisms in place whereby organisations could arrange themselves to take advantage of that exemption. John Oake reported an instance where Sharpe's Pottery had managed to save £40,000 VAT but the Heritage Lottery Fund had then clawed back £35,000 on a 'change of mind'. Frank McArdle advised that the District Council could facilitate how groups worked with VAT and Reverend Hollins queried whether expertise/specialist advice could be built-in to a funding package. The Chair felt that a single local management centre would be ideal and Jo Smith reported that the CVS could fulfil some of this role. Helena Stubbs referred to the organisation, 'Pro-help' which could give some advice on VAT but Jo Smith expressed concern that there was not enough Pro-help advice to cover the whole area. Jo Smith referred to work already being undertaken on Centres for Excellence (Single Management Centres) to give advice on such issues and it was noted that DDEP had been supportive on the reporting of outputs. The Chair advised that he felt that it was fortunate that the SSP had allocated money to the Local Strategic Partnership.

Councillor Whyman queried whether an organisation drafting bids could draft two bids, one to the accountable body and one to the Community Partnership Scheme. Jo Smith felt that there was a need to encourage funders to work closely together and was concerned that the LSP would pre-concern itself with economic output rather than key issues of direct concern to the LSP. The Chair felt that there was a need to ensure that work on funding ultimately linked back to the Community Strategy and problems experienced this year were likely due to the fact that a Strategy was not in place. He envisaged that in future work could be commissioned in accordance with the Community Strategy and the areas of greatest need could be identified, work commissioned and DDEP to part fund accordingly. Sharon Forton advised that the LSP should be engaging more with DDEP on next year's programme. Councillor Wheeler stated that if work was commissioned next year the VAT issue would be solved and South Derbyshire District Council would commission it. Councillor Whyman felt that communities were not always interested in economic output and referred to an example at Dalbury Lees accordingly. He stated that commissioning work would be appropriate as long as shared funding was in place from other partners. Sharon Forton felt that these points should be reported back to DDEP. It was suggested that David Wright of DDEP could be invited to attend a future Board Meeting to discuss some of the above issues raised.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That letters be sent to GOEM, the RDA and DDEP outlining the frustrations with regard to VAT implications as discussed above (and that the Vice-Chair have sight of the letters before they are sent).***
- (2) That David Wright of DDEP be invited to attend a future Board Meeting to discuss some of the above issues raised.***

LSP/14. **DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

Ian Reid outlined the content of the Draft Community Strategy and the proposed arrangements for finalising the document prior to the Forum Meeting on 19th August 2004. It was envisaged that the Strategy would be a fairly short

document of approximately 30 pages focussing on the provision of information to support the consultation process and a list of the proposed contents were circulated accordingly. Also circulated was a sample section of the Community Safety Theme to give the Board an indication of how the information collected from partners at the theme meetings was being presented in the final document. The Chair advised that he felt the preamble was too long. He was confident that the Board was shaping its priorities and expressed support for the back page circulated for the Community Safety Themes. He also expressed support for the cross-partnership issues. Jo Smith suggested that the 'where are we now section' could be cut in half and Frank McArdle referred to the Council's Committee Reports which outlined what the report was seeking at the beginning and stated that this might be an ideal template to use. Ian Reid expressed that he had some concerns regarding this as it was a consultation document aiming to open out debate. Glenys Williams felt that people were interested in statistics but felt that these should be included as an annexe to the main report. The Chair expressed the need to emphasise that this was a draft document and referred to the City Health Strategy which clearly stated the current service position, what it proposed to do and then in an annexe how it was going to do it. Councillor Whyman expressed support for the document and its presentation. He felt that where the Partnership wanted to be should be at the start together with its vision. John Oake suggested a modest change of 'where do we want to be – where the community want to be'. Jo Smith felt that the document needed to be in plain English, shorter and snappier. Susan Bell advised that two sides of A4 was as much as the general public were prepared to digest. Councillor Whyman suggested that this was also a working document which needed to inform all partners. Susan Bell suggested that maybe the Partnership could produce two Draft Community Strategies, one long and one short version. The Chair felt that action plans were needed. Glenys Williams indicated that she would show the document to some of the community using OPRA to ascertain the views of the general public. Jo Smith felt that there was a need to ensure that the public were not overwhelmed by the document.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Draft Community Strategy be prepared to include a vision at the front followed by Challenges for the Partnership. Information to be kept to a maximum of two pages, illustrations to be used.***
- (2) That the Chairs of the Theme Groups be given ultimate responsibility to reflect the above discussions in their Group's final submission.***

(At 10.35 a.m. Sharon Forton left the Meeting).

LSP/15. **CONSULTATION STRATEGY**

A report from Chimera Consultanting was circulated which outlined their findings from research undertaken about partner consultation work. This report made suggestions for a consultation framework for the Draft Community Strategy. It was important that the LSP detailed the proposed consultation exercises at the Forum Meeting on 19th August 2004. Circulated for information was the contribution the District Council proposed to make to the Programme. Ian Reid advised that it was felt important to take advantage of existing working mechanisms. The indicative actions listed were examples not an exhaustive list. Adam Jeffrey advised the Board that he was looking for the best way forward to oversee this process from now on. Consultation work would be undertaken during the months September Page 4 of 6 November 2004. The twelve priorities of the

Partnership needed some definition as some statements e.g. valuing diversity, were meaningless to the general public. The Chair advised that the Draft Strategy would be launched in August 2004 followed by a press release and a three month consultation process. Focus Groups would be taking place throughout. The consultants were to meet one to one with each of the Chairs of the Theme Groups and these Meetings would be facilitated during the next two weeks. Adam Jeffrey circulated a standard form used by the Citizens Panel and suggested that this questionnaire be used as part of the consultation process. Councillor Wheeler expressed concern that the sheet did not include a question on the area which that particular member of the public was from. A general discussion took place regarding the layout of the questionnaire.

(At 11.05 a.m. Reverend Hollins and John Oake left the Meeting.)

Jo Smith advised with regard to consultation there was a need to look at Participatory Appraisal and priorities within priorities etc. Ian Reid acknowledged a questionnaire did not reach all groups and the Chair emphasised that the questionnaire was only one element of the consultation process. Jo Smith talked about specific issues relating to consulting with Hard to Reach groups and Adam Jeffrey confirmed that there was a need for a definition of Hard to Reach groups. Jo Smith advised the Meeting of a list of Hard to Reach groups she had prepared and agreed that her Theme Group would discuss with the consultant how to further this issue.

Susan Bell requested that a brief be sent to all Theme Groups outlining new prompt questions etc. and Ian Reid agreed that this would be undertaken accordingly. Ian Reid advised the Meeting that £12,000 was still needed from partners to undertake consultation with the Hard to Reach groups. Jo Smith stated that there was a need to capture all the links utilised as part of the consultation process to use as good practice for any future consultation undertaken.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That partners detail their support to the consultation work so that a detailed provisional programme can be prepared for the Forum Meeting.***
- (2) That the proposed funding arrangements for the exercise for Hard to Reach groups be agreed and partners commit financial support for it.***
- (3) That the Thematic Group leaders (as agreed at the Meeting held on 18th March 2004), be authorised to undertake consultation work within the framework to develop and refine the priorities and indicative actions within their themes.***
- (4) That authority be delegated to the Chair to approve the detailed consultation framework to be presented to the Forum, based on the decisions made at this Meeting.***

LSP/16. **REPORT OF THE BUSINESS PLANNING GROUP**

The Board received the Minutes of the Business Planning Group Meeting held on 21st July 2004 and were advised that the following projects and financial sums had been agreed for submission in the Business Plan:-

<u>Project</u>	<u>DDEP Grant</u>
	£
Findern Access Centre	36,000
The Grid	15,000
West Street	50,500
National Forest	
– grant to small businesses	10,000
Credit Union Outreach Services	6,000
Swadlincote Area Regeneration Study	25,000
Administration Costs	<u>7,500</u>
TOTAL	150,000

It was noted that some concerns had been expressed regarding the National Forest Project but the timescale allowed for these issues to be resolved.

There being no other business the Meeting terminated at 11.20 a.m.

T. HURRELL

CHAIR