

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

**FROM: Colin Spence, Babergh's Representative
on the West Suffolk LSP Board**

REPORT NUMBER E294

TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING 9 March 2006

WEST SUFFOLK LSP DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGY

1. **SUMMARY**

1.2 The first Community Strategy was produced by the West Suffolk LSP in 2003.

1.3 This second Community Strategy sets out the LSP's vision, values, its recent achievements and the key priorities for the West Suffolk area to be achieved over the next ten years.

1.4 The strategy is currently out for consultation whilst being refined further.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the committee approve the main contents of the West Suffolk LSP draft Community Strategy following the proposal of any amendments it would like to see.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None directly.

4. **KEY INFORMATION**

4.1 The West Suffolk LSP is consulting on its revised Community Strategy.

4.2 The strategy sets out the priorities to be delivered over the next ten years.

4.3 The strategy is being refined by partners during the consultation period, and this offers an opportunity for Members to propose any amendments they would like to see.

4.4 Action plans are being developed to deliver the priorities identified.

4.5 The Community Strategy will be agreed by the WSLSP board in May 2006 and will then be circulated.

5. **APPENDICES**

(a) West Suffolk LSP draft Community Strategy

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

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WESTERN SUFFOLK LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

**DRAFT
COMMUNITY
STRATEGY**

2006 to 2016

MAKING LIFE BETTER

FOR CONSULTATION

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FOREWORD

We established the Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership (WSLSP) in 2001, in response to the Government's requirement that local authorities work more closely in partnership with other organisations. We provide an effective framework within which a variety of geographic and thematic partnerships can operate.

The WSLSP is made up of Public Sector organisations, Community and Voluntary organisations, businesses and local people.

Working together is important because it:

- Enables and encourages joint funding
- Makes effective use of community resources
- Avoids duplication of work.
- Brings together experience and expertise.
- Develops an understanding of local needs
- Empowers local community representatives
- Makes service providers more accountable to local people
- Influences service providers to re-shape services

We produced the first Community Strategy in 2003, which set out key themes with objectives and a set of actions and outcomes. It provided a framework for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well being of the community. We also need to work with all people in our communities to ensure we are providing excellent and appropriate public services.

This second Community Strategy sets out our vision, values, our recent achievements and the key priorities for the Western Suffolk area to be achieved over the next ten years. During the consultation period we want everyone to participate in building up the delivery mechanisms to enable achievement of our priorities. The Strategic Priorities, which will be reviewed regularly, set out what we want to achieve for West Suffolk over the next ten years. These reviews will be done after service providers have engaged with local communities.

Achievement of the priorities will contribute significantly to the development of the area. The priorities and targets will be achieved and delivered, as far as possible, through existing area community partnerships and action teams, which include public and private sector organisations, voluntary and community sector groups, local businesses and the residents of the area.

Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership Board

1. THE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership operates on three levels:

The Partnership Forum

The Forum, which meets quarterly, is the primary group for community engagement. It includes all organisations and individuals who have an interest in and commitment to Western Suffolk and all relevant issues. It will also operate through smaller but linked action teams relevant to the targets. These teams will be responsible for detailed development and implementation of action plans, development and implementation of initiatives and projects, and investigation and consultation on community needs.

Community Strategy Steering Group

Brings together lead officers from the Local Councils, Primary Care Trust, Police, the Environment Agency, the Voluntary and Community Sector in addition to lead officers from the action teams to establish priorities for action, co-ordinate, task, mentor and monitor the work of the action teams. They will also establish and maintain links with other key regional and local partnerships.

Executive Board

Exercises executive responsibility for the Partnership and is the final decision-maker for the Partnership. Representatives are from the same partners as the CSSG, but includes elected members. It is the final accountable body for the partnership.

A list of all the partners of the Board and CSSG is produced at Appendix 1

2. AREA PROFILE

Western Suffolk is at the heart of East Anglia and the Eastern Region, bordered by Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and the eastern part of Suffolk. It brings together three Councils, Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury and West Babergh into a common partnership with many common issues and concerns. Western Suffolk is one of the safest places to live in the country with crime such as house burglary and theft of motor vehicles reducing significantly in recent years. We must, however, be aware of new crime trends such as street violence in our towns and the potential increase in serious drug dealing. Reduction of antisocial behaviour remains at the forefront of our priorities and we must ensure that people can enjoy a peaceful life in Western Suffolk.

The area is renowned for the beauty of its forests and heaths and has many 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI's) and other designated conservation areas, such as the Brecks and Dedham Vale. The area has a predominately rural character with low population density, with approximately half the population living in rural areas.

Western Suffolk is on two strategic road routes. The A11 trunk road from London to Norwich and the A14 from the Midlands to Ipswich and the East Coast ports. These routes provide businesses in the area with exceptional access to the rest of the eastern region, the UK and Northern Europe. The A14 is an important link to the expanding city of Cambridge, which has some of the most sought after commercial and industrial development in the region. Cambridge is identified as a national growth area by government and most of Western Suffolk is included in the Cambridge sub region. The railway, with stations at Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket and Brandon, has links to

Cambridge, Peterborough, and London. Both London and the Midlands can be reached by road within 90 minutes. West Suffolk is close to Stansted Airport, with Sudbury and Haverhill only 40 minutes by road from this international airport. However this is not without problems. The A14 and A11 need to be upgraded as the expansion of Stansted Airport, and expansion of the east coast ports are likely to stretch their capacity to the limit.

Bury St Edmunds is a significant tourist centre, and Newmarket is a market town renowned as a centre for horseracing. There are in addition the smaller market towns of Brandon, Mildenhall, Haverhill and Sudbury, as well as a large rural area. The area has had significant London migration to Mildenhall, Brandon, Haverhill and Sudbury.

Mildenhall and Lakenheath host the largest United States Air Force bases in the country. The American community, associated with the bases, is in excess of 9,000 people and is unique in the UK. Newmarket is renowned as the home of British horseracing, attracting visitors and economic regeneration to the area. The Centre Parcs Holiday Village at Elveden Forest is an important visitor attraction and employer of around 1,500 local people.

Small businesses thrive, which contribute to a generally prosperous area, but there is deprivation in significant pockets of the population. There is generally good health, and low unemployment, however there are pockets of health inequalities, high unemployment, low educational attainment, and relatively high crime levels. The skills base and wage levels are low in parts of the area, with some communities over reliant on a single large employer.

Economically the area is changing. Potential changes in sugar production could adversely affect employment, and lack of appropriate skills could affect the ability of IT industries to prosper and expand. However the constantly changing nature of agriculture should also allow new opportunities to develop.

A statistical profile of Western Suffolk is being prepared

3. EMERGING ISSUES

There is a need to improve the training and business support infrastructure if the area is to benefit from the Cambridge-Stansted growth corridor. Whilst unemployment is currently low, there is often an over-reliance on declining sectors, e.g. automotive sector in Sudbury. Many of our university trained young people fail to return to this attractive region often, it is believed, due to lack of higher wage job opportunities and lack of affordable housing.

There is a growing concern that Central and Regional Government funding to tackle deprivation, isolation and health inequalities will be targeted at the larger towns outside of the area, when programmes can achieve a “bigger bang for their buck”. This would result in the pockets of rural deprivation that exist in this attractive area declining further. The issue is how best to ensure the vitality and viability of Western Suffolk market towns in order that they can function as economic, social and health care service centres for their rural hinterlands.

As a rural area accessibility is a very live issue and this could be dependent on improved public transport. Over the life of this Strategy there will be a considerable increase in the ‘Over-60’ population. This brings advantages and disadvantages. As those people retire it should give a large pool of people as potential volunteers, but as they get older they can become increasingly dependent on the public services.

For younger people business and entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged, to allow those living in or moving to the area can work as well as live in the area. Issues around Climate Change also becoming a subject for action.

4. OUR VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The vision of Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership is to 'make life better' for all people in the Western Suffolk area. We will do this by:

- Listening carefully to the views of local people
- Building on the work of existing partnerships and community networks
- Looking at the profile of the Western Suffolk area
- Lobbying and influencing Regional and National Government
- Implementing strategies and actions to improve quality of life

As a result our strategic goals to improve the quality of life are:

Maximise the potential of all children and young people
Develop and maintain a safe, strong and sustainable community
Create and support healthier communities
Develop a prosperous and sustainable community

These strategic goals match the areas for improvement as negotiated for the Local Area Agreements (LAA). Many of the LAA targets are included in the Targets and Action Plan, which mirrors these objectives and describes how we will implement actions to achieve the appropriate outcomes, and deliver better services at less cost.

What are 'Local Area Agreements?' is answered at Appendix 2

5. OUR VALUES

West Suffolk is now a lively and diverse community comprising people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds with a variety of talents and experience. We recognise and respect this, together with the contribution that our various communities make to West Suffolk life. We hold equality and diversity as core values in our work and are committed to removing barriers, which inhibit access to our services. We will also strive to keep all residents socially included and work together as partners to develop a sense of well-being by:

- Not discriminating against anyone
- Making people feel safe in their environment
- Ensuring people have access to a range of support services
- Allowing everyone to feel able to influence and engage in the political process
- Helping people feel valued in the community
- Improving the quality of life for all residents

We will encourage:

- Individual communities to reflect a balanced demographic and social profile
- A vibrant and productive mix of community and voluntary organisations
- People to feel a sense of ownership of community assets

We are also committed to the prudent use of resources and we will seek to manage these resources in ways that will minimise environmental damage, protect our area's natural and built environment and promote sustainable development.

We also strive to achieve economic prosperity for the benefit of everybody, maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Suffolk Speaks

A summary of the results of 'Suffolk Speaks' research is produced as Appendix 3

The Forum

This was described above and it meets regularly four times per year. During 2005 the Forum met three times and it:

- Brought together organisations and individuals from Western Suffolk
- Contributed to the development and implementation of the Community Strategy
- Implemented Community Engagement
- Started work on the Community Strategy Review

The results of the Forum's discussion on the Community Strategy Review are recorded at Appendix 4

Community meetings

We organised Community meetings in conjunction with local Community Partnerships and Voluntary Organisations in Newmarket, Haverhill, Sudbury, Brandon and Bury St Edmunds. These produced a wealth of comments, many of which have been included in the Action Plan.

A summary of the findings from these meetings is attached as Appendix 5

Council newspapers

Articles have appeared in all three Council newspapers asking for people to say what the area's needs are, and any other comments, to contribute to the final document.

The results of these articles are produced at Appendix 6

Action Groups

In the future we intend to establish action teams based on the quality of life themes set out in the Action Plan. All the appropriate groups and individuals will be part of those groups to ensure the achievement of the outcomes.

7. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The vision for the Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework will be closely linked. The three Borough and District Councils are working closely to produce one LDF for West Suffolk and will work with the WSLSP to understand and review the main issues, which concern our local communities. They are currently working to

develop a vision to address social, environmental and economic trends. We will be adopting a linked approach to consultation and developing policies to address the local community's concerns.

The themes identified in this Community Strategy will all be fully taken into account in the emerging policies and proposals of the Local Development Framework Documents. The following priorities identified in the Community Strategy are of particular relevance to the LDF:

- Maintain and improve the quality of the environment
- Support sustainable business and encourage and create job opportunities
- Ensure the provision of good quality affordable housing
- Ensure that Western Suffolk has an integrated transport policy
- Contribute to the vitality of town centres and villages, and make them more welcoming to visitors
- Promote choice and opportunity for all in cultural provision
- Preserve the area's cultural heritage and establish it as the cultural heart of the region

8. ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Delivery Plan 2004/5

We created a Delivery Plan with 15 priorities and 24 targets and established a Performance Management Database to monitor achievements. At the time this document was printed 6 targets had been achieved. 13 other targets were on target to be achieved by March 2006.

Western Compass

This is a project, which began in May 2004 involving Police, Health Agencies, the Borough and District Councils and Suffolk County Council to:

- Apprehend persistent offenders at an early stage
- Help offenders to rapid access to drug treatment
- Assist in stabilising lifestyles
- Engage difficult clients
- Assist crime reduction

Health Inequalities Network

- Has brought together all the agencies involved in delivering public health services
- Identifies the places where access to health is lower than other areas
- Plans and implements new accessible health provision, in those areas to assist
- access
- Encourages good health among the whole population
- Is producing a feasibility study to establish a Joint Public Health Unit

LSP Forum

- Brings together organisations and individuals from Western Suffolk
- Contributes to the delivery of the Community Strategy
- Implements Community Engagement

- Started work on the Community Strategy Review
- Has met quarterly

Assisted in the development of the Western Suffolk Consortium of Voluntary Organisations

- Assisted in establishing the Consortium
- Continues to support its existence

Has enabled networking and brought together organisations to plan services

- Has assisted in bringing together the three District and Borough Councils in working together on their common issues
- Other organisations are now making a much more significant contribution
- Some work is now commencing on Community Engagement working with Community Partnerships and Voluntary Organisations

Customer Relations Management/Vanguard

This project was commissioned by the LSP as part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) e-government funding to improve services and reduce costs. The Vanguard methodology has been used to radically improve service performance and reduce costs quickly. It required a complete rethinking of command and control management. The pilot ran from October 2004 to March 2005 jointly between Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. The Vanguard methodology and model being used proved to be very successful for the Disabled Facilities Grants. Vanguard has now been extended to housing benefits and payment of invoices in Forest Heath and homelessness and the processing of planning applications in St Edmundsbury. It has been recommended to the other partners within the LSP.

Comments on East of England Plan

We were one of the few LSP's to submit comments to the East of England Plan. The Plan sets out a draft spatial strategy to guide development in the East of England over the next 20 years. A total of 19 submissions were submitted to the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) regarding the East of England Plan, which was published in March 2005. EERA is a voluntary association of all the Local Authorities in the Eastern Region plus a variety of other stakeholders. The comments included support for improving the social and transport infrastructure in West Suffolk, support for increased finance for affordable and secure housing, more recognition of West Suffolk for high technology expansion as part of the Cambridge sub-region, and the need for a West Suffolk University Campus.

9. WHAT WE INTEND TO DO IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS

MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and Young People are the future of Western Suffolk. We need to set proposed actions, which assist young people to gain the tools and skills to improve their life chances and increase their opportunities to succeed at whatever they choose to do.

Some of the current issues, which we need to address are:

- teenage pregnancy

- obesity among children
- some children failing in school
- some children still living in poverty
- school exclusions
- abuse of drugs and alcohol.
- the lack of activities for young people, especially in the areas of physical activity.

We cannot change things overnight or even address everything at once. However we will try to address some of these issues in our Action Plan. It is essential that the number of children in the above categories be reduced to safeguard and protect their future, and enable children and young people to achieve their full potential. We want to work with the new children's services and the children's cluster groups, which have been established in West Suffolk.

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A SAFE, STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

a) Build a Safer Community

Building safer, stronger and sustainable communities is important for Western Suffolk. We all care about our safety. We want to feel safe in our homes and when walking out in our neighbourhood. We want to feel confident that our children are safe. We want the area where we live to be free from anti-social behaviour and crime. In fact, in a recent survey, 69% of people said that low levels of crime was one of the most important factors in making the county of Suffolk a good place to live. However, while crime is relatively low in Suffolk, fear of becoming a victim of crime remains a concern for many people.

To combat this we need to improve people's quality of life by improving accessibility, affordability and prosperity.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the police, local authorities and other agencies, including the voluntary and commercial sectors, to work together to tackle crime and disorder in local areas. There is need to:

- help offenders recognise the consequences of their crimes
- improve drug addiction treatment programmes
- manage young offenders to prevent re-offending
- work to combat racism and crimes against minority groups
- support victims of crime through organisations such as Victim Support
- improve and increase open spaces
- involve local people in decision making and delivery of services.

The partnership will support and develop initiatives that will help to reduce crime and the fear of crime. It is intended to reduce crime in West Suffolk to 13,285 offences by March 2008. The West Suffolk Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) has already set out a detailed strategy aimed at meeting Government crime reduction targets over the same period. It will be the intention of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to support initiatives and, where appropriate, provide funding to meet these targets.

Part of the method for reducing overall crime is the targeting of Prolific & Other Priority Offenders (POPO). This Government based strategy is designed to tackle the most persistent and prolific offenders committing crime within local communities. It has three complementary components:

- **Prevent and deter** – to stop people from engaging in offending behaviour and graduating into prolific offenders
- **Catch and convict** – actively tackling those who already are prolific offenders
- **Rehabilitate and resettle** – working with identified prolific offenders to stop their offending by offering a range of supportive interventions

The CDRP leads on this initiative and the LSP is intent on supporting every effort aimed at targeting these serial offenders.

Criminal damage offences occur as part of ongoing antisocial behaviour in towns and villages across the Area. Suffolk Constabulary has dedicated a number of officers to tackling both antisocial behaviour and criminal damage and much of this work involves detailed investigation, surveillance and targeting hotspot locations using camera equipment. Where such offences are linked together with ongoing and persistent antisocial behaviour the police will liaise with partner agencies and local communities to develop action plans to trace the offenders and to curtail the activity. Much of this work has been successfully achieved through auditing neighbourhoods and the LSP will be supporting a programme of neighbourhood auditing, which will identify areas where antisocial behaviour is occurring and seek to take steps to prevent it.

Part of home safety involves the prevention of fires that occur by accident or negligence. The partnership is committed to working with the Suffolk Fire Service to support fire reduction initiatives, particularly in the home. Some fires, of course, occur deliberately and the partnership will be seeking to reduce this figure to 150 offences by March 2008.

Like most communities, drugs plays its part in respect of both the night-time economy and crime associated with it. While some parts of the country have a much greater drug problem than West Suffolk, it is true to say that the supply of Class A drugs is prominent in our community and has the potential to grow as serious drug suppliers attempt to open new markets in smaller towns and communities. Suffolk Constabulary, working in partnership with key agencies, both from a health and a prevention perspective, has implemented successful operations that have secured the conviction of several serious drug suppliers. In addition to this, the Western Compass project is working hard to rehabilitate criminals whose lives are caught up in the desperation of drug offending. The partnership will support the police and the CDRP in their efforts to continue to detect serious drug offences over the next three years. It is, however, likely that the partnership can have most influence in respect of helping to develop the Western Compass initiative to ensure that there is sufficient clinical expertise, social support, housing and other opportunities for chaotic drug users to change their lifestyles.

b) Build a Stronger Community

Active citizenship helps to build stronger communities. It is important that we develop active citizenship by understanding and engaging with local people. It is essential that we work with the voluntary and community sector in service delivery, capacity building and promoting and supporting volunteering, ensuring an effective community voice on the LSP.

Effective consultation and engagement with local citizens and communities, with children and young people and hard to reach sectors of the community. The voluntary and community sector (VCS) has a strong role to perform in this area of activity. We will aim to develop a strong VCS to represent community views, provide more public service delivery and provide capacity building measures, which facilitate and support a robust VCS infrastructure.

We will actively support the VCS to improve the quality of life for residents and their members, by helping them access funding, network with service providers and other organisations, and develop their capacity in order to meet their objectives. We will work with representative groups to ensure that the partnership has clearly identified how it meets the varied particular needs of the community.

We also need to assist people to find better employment opportunities and to live fulfilled and creative lives.

c) Build an Accessible Community

Being able to access everyday key services such as, jobs, education, food shops, leisure facilities and healthcare is vital for the quality of life and economic prosperity of people in West Suffolk. Residents who cannot easily access these services are at risk of social exclusion, which may lead to isolation, poor health, low educational achievement and low employment.

West Suffolk's rural nature and ageing population mean that accessibility, is an important issue to be addressed in West Suffolk. Our consultation has shown that being able to access key services is important to people and improving accessibility is one of our priorities. Consultation carried out by Suffolk County Council and our own consultations identified that the main priorities for improving access was to improve local facilities and services for rural communities, including, village shops, banks/building societies, access to healthcare particular for older people, and post-16 education for young people.

One of the elements to improving accessibility is to improve public transport and we will make representations to relevant agencies to obtain this improvement and also to consider ways to fund and encourage more community transport.

d) Provision of Affordable Housing

An increase in affordable housing will also make stronger communities. We need to work with the Local Development Framework requirements for affordable housing to ensure higher levels of provision on new developments, and examine the opportunities that Local Authority land. Property reviews may offer to enable the development of new affordable housing schemes. It is essential to increase the use of exception site developments, by encouraging the work being undertaken by Suffolk ACRE on the Suffolk Rural Housing Enabler with parishes across Western Suffolk.

e) Enhance the built and natural environment

The natural and built environment is a key feature of sustainable development, which underpins economic and social wellbeing and quality of life. It can provide scope for leisure activities and is essential for encouraging investment, providing raw materials and energy required for economic development and for encouraging tourism. A high quality environment also enables people to live longer in good health. Conversely, environment degradation can lead to health and social problems and economic emigration. We therefore need to ensure that we look after our environment.

Our lifestyle can have a damaging effect on the environment, eg development, waste disposal, pollution, and climate change and we need to be able to evaluate and address these impacts by increasing our knowledge and understanding of the environment so that we can reduce or reverse the negative impacts. The environment is a basic resource on which we all depend and we need to manage our impact on it. If managed effectively, our impacts are not inevitably damaging, and compensation, mitigation and improvements can be made to reduce this damage.

We must ensure that we use water and minerals wisely, increase the use of renewable energy sources and reduce waste. We need to conserve our wildlife habitats, flora and fauna and replace lost habitats. The Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan identifies the action to be taken to address habitat and species priorities. It is also important to enhance the quality of our distinctive landscape, green spaces and our built environment and public spaces, as well as protecting historic buildings and archaeology. By working in partnership, there are opportunities for including environmental initiatives which, up to now, have been considered purely on social or economic grounds.

It must be an aim for everyone to prevent further overall deterioration of the environment and to secure enhancements, which contribute to an overall improvement in quality of life and pride in the environment.

CREATE AND SUPPORT HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Creating and supporting healthier communities and reducing health inequalities requires action on a broad front, involving partnership working at all levels. The determinants that contribute to poor health and inequalities are wide ranging and local action is needed to improve the health and well being of people living in Western Suffolk. Both preventative and remedial action is required.

In Western Suffolk we generally enjoy good standards of health and well being compared with many other parts of the country. However there are pockets of the population who do not enjoy as good health as others do.

An understanding of the term 'health' is vital to our work. We see it as not simply equating to illness and medical care as this fails to recognise the invaluable contribution of many individuals and organisations outside the National Health Service. These players are able to influence our social care and the underlying factors, which influence our health and well being. For us the concept of 'health' includes 'physical', 'mental', 'emotional', 'spiritual' and 'societal' dimensions. 'Well-being' is a harder term to define. It refers to an individual's sense of feeling safe, secure, free from stress and comfortable with their life and environment.

Understanding the importance and inter-relation of these factors for the different groups in our community is a vital role for the partnership. Only by bringing together the planning processes for health care, social care and wider health improvement will we achieve our ultimate aim of making life healthier. Opportunities for better partnership working will encourage the identification of new solutions to traditional problems, better targeting of resources and services better able to meet the needs of individuals.

Some of the current issues, which we need to address are:

- Lack of close family, friends, community group networks
- Poor lifestyle e.g. diet, exercise, smoking, alcohol and drug use
- Lack of Access to Services e.g. education, health and social care, transport, leisure
- Poverty, unemployment, social exclusion
- Poor air quality, housing, water quality, and working conditions
- Services for people with Mental Health problems

We cannot change things overnight or even address everything at once. However we will try to address some of these issues in our Action Plan

DEVELOP A PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

The economy of Western Suffolk is currently buoyant with a number of local firms expanding and new companies moving into the area. Unemployment is low across the area.

Across the Western Suffolk area, there is a range of business and employment, including manufacturing, agriculture, production and industrial based business. We recognise that some areas within the Western Suffolk area are more prosperous and thriving than other areas. In the areas where the economy is less buoyant, there is still a desire for diversity and growth. Regional development is key but we will ensure our efforts do not ignore the areas of potential growth and development.

We are also mindful that a good transport infrastructure is essential to business and employment and creating opportunities for participation by all people in the community. We understand that transport can be a particular concern to people living in rural areas and we will work to ensure that access to good public transport remains a key priority. We will develop service levels for rural areas to be above agreed minimum service level.

Despite the thriving outlook for the area, there remain a number of issues that need to be addressed in order to improve upon the present position. The Western Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership will be seeking to make a substantial contribution not only to the needs of the locally identified priorities but also to the regional and sub regional goals. It will make a positive contribution, in partnership with business, to the processes of implementation and share in the resultant rewards. As there are a number of key agencies each of whom are seeking to improve the economic prosperity of the area, it is important that their visions underpin the overall direction being pursued.

The Partnership will complement the work of the various organisations engaging in economic development in the area, ensuring the organisations are influenced gain maximum benefit for residents and visitors.

The intention of the LAA fourth block is to tackle the economic aspects of the sustainable community vision. A community may not be considered sustainable if it is unable to offer its members opportunities to generate sufficient wealth. The key aspect of this is ensuring that such opportunities are available to all sections of the community and that individuals are not disadvantaged throughout their lives by either geographic or upbringing. The underlying causes of deprivation are: lack of access to employment to which poor skills contribute. We need to address this on a cross district basis, as the impacts are often experienced across Western Suffolk.

Within the WSLSP area, a number of common themes, in terms of deprivation and access to employment opportunities exist. The labour market in the partnership area is typically tight, with low levels of unemployment (average 1.13%) however with typically low skills (14% above the East of England average of working age population with low no qualifications) This in turn leads to both low wages, traditional and limited opportunity employment. The area suffers from low levels of business start-up and entrepreneurship. This is evidenced by business formation rates. While this rate of 9.7% is in line with the Suffolk average, it is 1% below the regional average.

SPECIFIC LOCAL ISSUES

During our consultations with communities around Western Suffolk, we found that there are a number of specific local issues, which concern people and reduce the quality of life. The main issues highlighted were:

- Traffic in town centres and the need for better management and building relief roads
- Changes and in the way healthcare is delivered, especially if reductions are proposed
- Affordable and accessible facilities for young people
- More visible police presence
- More affordable housing
- Creation of cycle routes to encourage cycling
- Retention of local shops and services
- Late night anti-social behaviour
- Lack of convenient regular bus services to Bury St Edmunds from outlying areas
- Improvements in post-16 education
- Local cinema provision
- Improvements in mental health care provision

We consider that most of these issues are covered within our plans for the future and in our Action Plan. However increases in police presence, creation of cycle routes, local cinema provision and improvements in mental health care require huge amounts of investment. It is therefore our intention to be vocal about the need for improvements in these areas among our partners and other relevant agencies to encourage more investment to enable improvements.

10. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

At this consultation stage it was decided not to produce an Action Plan but to state the Board's strategic priorities which need to be addressed to 'Make life better' in Western Suffolk over the next ten years. Through the consultation process the Board wishes to gain views and opinions about the actions needed to deliver those strategic priorities. Appendices 3 to 5 suggest many options and will be considered with other suggestions made during the consultation period.

The following are the strategic priorities:

- 1. To improve skills and learning opportunities and outcomes to increase prosperity**
- 2. To enable a prosperous, sustainable economy for all and alleviate poverty**
- 3. To encourage sustainable tourism in West Suffolk**
- 4. To improve quality of life by reducing avoidable early deaths**
- 5. To improve quality of life by reducing health inequalities for everybody**
- 6. To improve quality of life by providing education and support on health wellbeing that leads to less need for health services**
- 7. Promote good health in children and young people**
- 8. Encourage and enable achievement in children and young people**
- 9. To make West Suffolk a safer, stronger place to live, visit and work**
- 10. To promote social inclusion for children and young people**
- 11. To enable the development of a sustainable environment**

WESTERN SUFFOLK LSP – COMMUNITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The purpose of this consultation document is to ascertain the views of the public and corporate views of organisations, both among partners and other organisations in addition to the LSP partners.

It is important that these views are sought to be sure that as many views as possible are obtained from a wide variety of sources. It will also help organisations, especially those we are working with, to be participants in the process to help give ownership from the community.

Please participate by answering the following questions:

1. Has the Document included all the elements required to ‘Make life better’ in Western Suffolk?

If not what can be added?

2. Are the themes correct?

If not what changes do you want to see?

3. Are the strategic priorities correct for Western Suffolk?

If not can you suggest changes?

4. What actions are needed to deliver those priorities?

Please suggest actions under each heading

To improve skills and learning opportunities and outcomes to increase prosperity

To enable a prosperous, sustainable economy for all and alleviate poverty

To encourage sustainable tourism in West Suffolk

To improve quality of life by reducing avoidable early deaths

To improve quality of life by reducing health inequalities for everybody

To improve quality of life by providing education and support on health wellbeing that leads to less need for health services

Promote good health in children and young people

Encourage and enable achievement in children and young people

To make West Suffolk a safer, stronger place to live, visit and work

To promote social inclusion for children and young people

To enable the development of a sustainable environment

5. Is there anything else, which needs adding to the Strategy?

Please complete, detach and send to:

David Wood
C/o Forest Heath District Council
District Offices
College Heath Road
Mildenhall
Suffolk
IP33 7EY

Or Email to: david.wood@forest-heath.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

WESTERN SUFFOLK LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Board members – January 2006

NAME	JOB TITLE	ORGANISATION
Chairman		
John Griffiths	Councillor/Leader	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Vice-Chairman		
David Burnip	Chief Executive	Forest Heath District Council
Other Members		
Deborah Cadman	Chief Executive	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Geoffrey Jaggard	Councillor/Leader	Forest Heath District Council
Colin Muge	Chairman	West Suffolk PCT
Rebecca Hopfensperger	County Councillor	Suffolk County Council
Georgina Pharaoh	Chairman	Suffolk Police Authority
Helen Style	Corporate Director	Babergh District Council
Brian Williams	Assistant Director of Property Services	Suffolk County Council
Hazel Pidsley	Chief Officer	West Suffolk Consortium for Voluntary Organisations
Tim Abbott	Chief Officer	Suffolk Connect
Sue Jay	Area Manager	West Suffolk MIND
Wil Gibson	Chief Executive	Suffolk ACRE
Amanda Sturgeon	Chief Officer	MENTA

David Hurley	Managing Director	Anglia Business Solutions
Mike Dean	Assistant Director of Operations	Learning and Skills Council, Suffolk
Mary Mitson-Woods	Chief Executive	Suffolk Association of Local Councils
John Taylor	Member	Suffolk Association of Local Councils
Colin Spence	Councillor	Babergh District Council
Amanda Davison-Young	Chief Executive	Anglia Newspapers

Community Strategy Steering Group Members – January 2006

NAME	JOB TITLE	ORGANISATION
Jerry Massey	Corporate Director	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Richard Hunt	Head of Culture and Heritage	Suffolk County Council
Jo Jones	Principal Policy Officer	St Edmundsbury Borough Council
Judy Rainer	Head of Partnerships	West Suffolk PCT
Bob Taylor	Partnership Manager	Suffolk Constabulary (West)
Helen Style	Corporate Director	Babergh District Council
Ann Williams	Principal	West Suffolk College
Wil Gibson	Chief Executive	Suffolk ACRE
Tony Pierce	Strategic Director	Forest Heath District Council
David Wood	Manager	Western Suffolk LSP
Hazel Pidsley	Representative	West Suffolk Consortium for Voluntary Organisations
Sylvia Clough	Officer	Environment Agency

APPENDIX 2

WHAT IS A LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT?

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is an agreement between local organisations and central government setting targets and outcomes that partners will aim to achieve over a three year period. The priorities and targets are set locally and not imposed from central government, although it will include some national priorities.

There is a LAA in place in Suffolk, which will help to improve service delivery of public services, which will focus on achieving local solutions which meet local needs bypassing structures, processes and organisational boundaries

Such an agreement has greater flexibility to direct resources where they are needed most and should give greater freedom from bureaucracy.

APPENDIX 3

A summary of the results of Suffolk Speaks carried out 2004 for West Suffolk, In order of priority from correspondents resident in West Suffolk

Reduce Anti-social Behaviour

Better Health Services

More visible police

More affordable Housing

Better public transport and better roads

More recycling and less waste

More village shops – less out of town shopping centres

More facilities for young people in west Suffolk

Suffolk Speaks is a Suffolk wide research project carried out by a professional Market Research Company using face to face interviews.

APPENDIX 4

The members of the LSP Forum were asked on 4 April 2004 to give their comments and ideas about the content of the first Community Strategy and these are the results.

Suggested themes

It was a majority view that the themes in the first strategy were generally correct, however more emphasis should be made of:

Sustainable communities
Affordable housing
Transport
Rural issues
Young People
Older People

Other related comments

Should emphasise what is specific to Western Suffolk
Must relate to Local Development Framework
There are possibly too many themes and objectives to reasonably achieve
First Strategy was probably over ambitious

Objectives/actions

Make life safer:

To tackle anti-social behaviour 'together'.
To make Suffolk safer in terms of fire ie fitting smoke alarms
FACT - fire prevention and carers together - identify hazards and possible access problems

Transport

Need an emphasis on public transport.
Need to do some thinking around the A14 due to increase in traffic.
Transport - A11 / A14 / Stansted - getting people into and out of Stansted - has an impact on roads and business.

Make life Healthier

To help bridge health inequalities for poorer families.
Link with other strategies - 'Choosing Health' White Paper.
Emphasis on prevention of poor-health
Develop a Carers' Charter for employers and carers which provides guidance and support for carers re-entering employment.

Clean and Green

Flooding issues
Water availability
Solar Panels in new housing
Need more cycle paths.
Need more green space

Local voice on waste management and climate change
Need the objectives to be more specific to local area and issues.

More Prosperous

Need more promotion of business to be more productive.
Target business involvement - so business understands the impact of the LSP.
Corporate Social Responsibility - ties business with community
- raise awareness.

Learning

Develop a University Campus in West Suffolk
Increase the number of University places in Suffolk
Schools need to address that achievement levels in Suffolk are lower than national averages
Training to match needs of employers
Encourage apprenticeships
Retired people can be used as a better resource, with retraining and skills.
Look at getting more people into learning

Making an inclusive community

Include raised awareness of business community.
To promote services to a diverse community, i.e., disability, race, gender, religion
Encourage young people to become more involved in the community

Active and Creative

Link in with Suffolk wide branding of encouraging tourism.
Work with the Cultural Pathfinder
PSA regeneration to deliver Year of the Volunteer

Community Engagement

Grass roots consultation and engagement should be conducted on housing needs

General Comments

Include findings of Village Appraisals
Use Parish Plans - maybe use some parishes as pilots to draw together information.
Communities do not identify with the themes.
Looking wider at community facilities that aren't being used.
We should be encouraging better use of schools during holidays
Conduct more Community Engagement
Better communication with Voluntary groups
Need to align the groups: to where the money is going
The themes/objectives should reflect funding streams
Voluntary sector should be involved across every theme.
Encourage Match funding
Any delivery, needs to add value.
Targeted more for the needs of the local area.
Less about redoing objectives, more about identifying the ways these are delivered. A gap analysis can help to find ways of meeting the objectives.
Should concentrate on a few targets each year and deliver - this encourages community engagement.

Don't duplicate objectives that are already core business for WSLSP Members
Need to set SMART Targets first, then organisations can judge how they can deliver these targets

Community Strategy should be the subject of Rural Proofing

There is a need for better communication

WSLSP Members to host community notice boards to inform communities and encourage community engagement.

The LSP should have representation at community events to publicise and communicate the message of what is the LSP

Need to engage with community so they know what and who the WSLSP is and does.

Objectives need to be aligned with other plans.

APPENDIX 5

RESULTS FROM THE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community Meetings were held in Brandon, Newmarket, Sudbury, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill during the latter half of 2005. These are the main issues raised at one or more of those meetings. They are not in priority order.

Traffic Issues/Strategy required/Bypass required

More affordable and accessible facilities/activities including diversionary for young people, encourage to volunteer/Youth Forum/help participate in sport

Affordable Housing, including villages and also sheltered, and singles

More police on the beat especially at night, and better telephone links

Create safe cycling routes everywhere – try to reduce traffic

Retain local services shops, post offices, hospitals

Concern about pub opening hours/nightlife and violence/ban alcohol on streets

Better public transport/Through bus service to and from Bury St Edmunds hospital and to doctors, from and to all locations also evening and late night/park and ride

More central facilities police station, health centre, in one building

Increase integration with the migrants and other BME communities including English lessons to encourage better racial harmony

Encourage business to make use of unoccupied premises

Facilities for older people to remain in their own homes independently

More affordable educational opportunities for adults

Encourage older people to use their skills for the community

More CCTV

Childcare co-ordination and parenting skills

Encourage more community involvement by schools

More active involvement of agencies in deciding community strategies

More long term funding for voluntary organisations including community transport

More interim care after hospital discharge/crisis support

Better family support – and organisations giving provision

Funding for social enterprises

More recycling provision

Funds for training for local businesses to develop skills

Better quality mental health services including eating disorders

More support for children disillusioned with school

Develop a rosette scheme for shops in excellence for disabled access

More Drug advise

Vulnerable/excluded children need earlier support early intervention

More start up units for small businesses

Obtain status for Maths Science Languages in schools

Check pavements for dropped kerbs

Grants for small businesses

Develop business to capture Cambridge effect

Multi-agency support for vulnerable elderly people

More disabled access and parking bays

More joined up thinking for services

Proper partnership working between Voluntary and Statutory Sector

Better information to/involvement of rural communities

Help for business to recycle waste

More recycling points in community areas/estates

Encourage better understanding and engagement by people/schools etc of waste to reduce landfill

Address Litter problems/More litter picks in residential areas

Need more staff and volunteers to work with Young People

Road links to and from various towns are poor

More community centres needed in estates

Need to address Anti-Social Behaviour

Need to address pockets of deprivation

Skills And qualifications shortage

APPENDIX 6

A QUESTIONNAIRE WAS PLACED IN FOREST NEWS, WHICH REACHES MOST HOUSES IN FOREST HEATH DISTRICT AREA

80 forms were returned from readers and these were the issues they wanted addressed in priority order

1. Make a clean and Green Environment
2. Improve public transport
3. Make life Safer
4. Make a more prosperous community
5. Make life healthier
6. Make life better in rural areas
7. Make life better for Older People
8. Make life better for children and young people
9. Make life active and creative
10. More Affordable Housing
11. Make a learning community
12. Improve pavements and kerbs
13. Make an inclusive community