

**BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**FROM: Colin Spence, Babergh's Representative REPORT NUMBER **E300**  
on the Partnership Board**

**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DATE OF MEETING 28 March 2006  
(COMMUNITY SERVICES)  
COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON WESTERN SUFFOLK LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP  
(WSLSP) AND COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update members on the impact and progress of the Western Suffolk LSP and the Community Strategy.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The WSLSP was established in 2001 and consists of public sector, community and voluntary organisations and businesses. It covers the geographic area of Forest Heath District Council, St. Edmundsbury District Council and the western part of Babergh District Council, with a population of approximately 200,000. One of its main purposes is to prepare and publish a Community Strategy, which is a statutory duty on local authorities in partnership with other organisations. The first Community Strategy 'Making Life Better' was published in 2003.

- 2.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the WSLSP and Community Strategy at your meeting on the 5 April 2005, and requested a report in twelve months time. At that meeting the structure of the partnership was described and the achievements to date which included:

- the development of Operation Western Compass
- the development of the Health Inequalities Network
- environmental issues
- 'Investors in communities' funding
- co-operation with targets for the Cultural Pathfinder

This report describes the progress made since that meeting.

**3. COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 3.1 A Community Strategy provides a mechanism for the Council and its partners to identify community priorities, reflect these in a long term vision, identify a set of priorities, and to draw up an action plan for the WSLSP to follow in order to achieve these objectives. The Strategy:

- provides a planning framework against which decisions can be taken by the LSP about resources in a way which reflects locally agreed priorities and increases accountability and transparency

- enables a process which allows all public spending in Western Suffolk to be reviewed locally and priorities set in the light of local needs, thus influencing the corporate plans of the partner organisations
  - encourages closer links between the major partner organisations to help services and spending decisions to be more joined up and efficient
- 3.2 It was agreed in the latter part of 2004 to review the Community Strategy, and work commenced on the review in June 2005.
- 3.3 In brief the new Strategy has set out an area profile, emerging issues for Western Suffolk, a vision and objectives, the LSP's values, the work on Community Engagement and the plans for the next ten years to 2016.
- 3.4 The strategy follows four themes as follows:
- 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
- 3.5 Each theme is described and the work being done and the work which needs to be done in the future, by the LSP.
- 3.6 This has resulted in eleven strategic priorities for Western Suffolk:
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
- 3.7 The document will now be the subject of consultation until the end of March, when a full action plan will be developed. The action plan will be a document with targets based around the specific projects the LSP will collectively undertake or fund to deliver these priorities. The idea is to use the priorities as a commissioning framework, and not to create an action plan which simply records the work already being done by the partners. The plan will show where the LSP is making a real difference, adding value to the local community by enabling

projects, which might otherwise not have happened. There is no desire among the partners to develop new targets and measures, which duplicate existing performance management mechanisms.

#### 4. **OTHER PROGRESS**

##### **Community Strategy Delivery Plan**

4.1 A copy of the updated Delivery Plan as presented to the LSP Board on the 2 December has been circulated with the report. Further updates are currently being collated for the Board meeting on 22 February. Specifically:

- Significant progress has been made on the Health Inequalities Strategy with three priorities identified as fuel poverty, smoking cessation, and healthy eating. These priorities will be carried forward to the new Community Strategy for action and services provision in targeted areas
- Figures for the people participating in Western Compass are also stated, which now includes one participant from Sudbury
- Development of the 'Investors in Communities' Business Plan, which may result in new resources to Western Suffolk
- A partnership is being planned to help progress and action to reduce young people in NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- Work is being done with Suffolk ACRE to increase the Rural Housing Enabler.
- However we are still waiting for reports on progress on the targets on the Cultural Pathfinder.

##### **Leadership Skills**

4.2 Using funding from the ODPM Leadership Project the members of the Board and the CSSG have taken part in a Leadership Skills Programme which has been designed to help partners clarify their role in the partnership and help them to contribute positively, by learning to be a leader in a partnership format. Three exploration days were held which identified the skills required to work effectively in partnership. The programme is intended to build the partnership to be effective in planning and delivering new services. Work has already started on the Health Inequalities Group, which identified a number of issues which needed to be addressed. A presentation was made to the Board and to the CSSG by representatives of Exeter University, who conducted a facilitation day with members the CSSG which identified the strategic priorities. Further training days will be held in the near future.

##### **Community Engagement**

4.3 The Forum has met four times during the past year, with average attendances of 70 people from all sectors of the community. At the meeting on 30 January workshops were held which produced many significant ideas for future action. During September, October and November five meetings were held in cooperation with the West Suffolk Community Partnerships. These identified a large number of issues and needs from Brandon, Newmarket, Sudbury, Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds, of which the major issues are listed in an appendix to the new Strategy.

In addition the LSP is actively engaged in the children's cluster groups, the mental health partnership and other groups within the West Suffolk area. Findings from the Forum on 24 April are also listed in an appendix to the Strategy.

## **Business Plan**

4.4 A Business Plan was agreed by the Board on 2 December, which set out where the LSP needs to improve and also identified the objectives of the LSP over the next two years. These are to:

- Strengthen the Partnership
- Identify partner roles
- Develop an Area Profile
- Review the Community Strategy
- Develop a Community Engagement strategy
- Enhance the role of the Forum
- Publicise the partnership activities
- Become a fund holding organisation and commission services

The targets identified to achieve the objectives were:

- All partners to participate in the Leadership Programme
- Make the Forum an organisation to engage the community
- Publish a Community Strategy with an Action Plan
- Create Annual Delivery Plans – first one for 2006/7 and each year thereafter
- Produce Performance Management Systems
- Establish Action Teams to ensure delivery of the objectives
- Establish a Website
- Use local publications and agencies for publicity and consultation
- Decide an appropriate legal structure to achieve its objectives
- Quarterly reports to the Board on progress of these objectives

All of these things are now being actively pursued, some of which are described in this report.

## **Constitution**

4.5 It was important to establish the LSP as an organisation able to take decision especially on funding. A constitution was agreed at the December Board meeting which established the LSP as a ‘consortium’ with powers to make decisions and to receive and distribute funds.

## **Local Area Agreement (LAA) Funding**

4.6 The funds to be received by the LSP from central government as a result of the LAA will be £209,000 from the Pump Priming Fund (PPG) and £519,000 will be received from the Performance Reward Grant (PRG). The PPG is specifically to enhance the twelve LPSA targets and the LSP took the decision to invite submissions from the twelve Lead Target Officers to specify projects, which will help to achieve those targets. Ten submissions were received at the CSSG on 13 January and seven were agreed in principle and three were asked for further information. A decision on the allocation of the funds will be taken at a later meeting, and submitted to the Board for approval on 22 February.

The PRG is a reward for the achievement of targets in the first LPSA agreement. This fund is much more flexible than the PPG and will be allocated to projects, which will achieve work towards the strategic priorities listed in the new community strategy. Decisions on how this will be distributed have yet to be made.

5. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Annual Report of the Western Suffolk LSP and Community Strategy be received, and any comments noted for consideration.

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