

**Notes of the Horsham District Community Partnership Board Meeting
held on Tuesday 25th November 2008 at 4.00pm
in The Drawing Room, Park House, Horsham.**

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence.

Those Present:

Gary Shipton	Editor, West Sussex County Times (Chairman)
Tom Crowley	Chief Executive, HDC
Clare Ebelewicz	Young & Older Persons Officer, HDC
Natasha Robinson	Administrative Technical Support Officer, HDC (minutes)
Julian Carrington	Community Planning Manager, HDC
David Standfast	Chief Executive, Saxon Weald
Leo Jago	Rural Towns Forum
Peter Scofield	Manager, Horsham YMCA
Les Ampstead	Rural Towns Development Officer, Action in Rural Sussex
Dr Jackie Johnston	Principal, The College of Richard Collyer
Cllr. Elizabeth Kitchen	District Councillor
Cllr Dr David Holmes	District Councillor
Ann Corkery	West Sussex PCT
Wayne Jones	Chief Superintendent, Sussex Police
Nigel Tinkler	Chief Officer, Age Concern
Claire Armstrong	Manager, Horsham Citizens Advice Bureau
Chris Dier	Director of Community Services, HDC

Apologies:

Janet Brown	Manager, Horsham Area Council for Voluntary Services
Eileen Clark	Deputy Director of Operations, West Sussex PCT
Alan Grant	Horsham Association of Local Councils
Paul Rowley	Head of Strategic & Community Planning, HDC
Cllr. Brad Watson OBE	County Councillor

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Board Meeting on 23rd September 2008, previously circulated.

It was agreed that the notes be accepted as a true record.

3. Matters Arising – from last minutes, including:

i) West Sussex Sustainable Community Strategy

Tom Crowley advised the Board that West Sussex County Council had approved their Sustainable Community Strategy on 10th October 2008. Working closely with the County Council will be important in making progress with our own Strategy and it is helpful to organise our SCS around the themes in the County-wide document.

It was suggested that the number of HDPC theme groups be rationalised in line with the four themes in the Horsham District SCS. It was suggested that single-issue theme groups that are working well should be retained since large cross-cutting groups cannot bring the same focus to an issue. However, it was agreed that the theme groups that no longer meet should be discontinued. (This topic was covered in more detail under Item 6 of the agenda.)

ii) Rural Forum for the South East

Julian Carrington explained that this is a new Forum to champion rural interests in the South East Region. It has been set up by GOSE with an independent Chair (the Chief Executive of Action in Rural Sussex until an election can be held). Les Ampstead represents the Community Partnership on the new Forum. Julian attended the first meeting on 5th November

(Les was on leave), which focussed on various procedural matters and prioritising rural issues. The next meeting will be held in February 2009.

4. Development of Horsham District's Sustainable Community Strategy - Report (Copy circulated with Agenda)

i) HDCP Annual Conference Notes – for information

Tom Crowley advised Members that the Annual Conference had gone very well considering the last minute change of venue. The conference notes (circulated prior to this meeting) and other feedback from the 'visioning' consultation would be translated into the draft Sustainable Community Strategy for a six week consultation with partners and other stakeholders.

Liz Kitchen mentioned the work of the Council's Visioning Advisory Group, which was set up to consider the different 'growth' scenarios in the Experian 'Visioning Horsham' report. Their report would be shared with the Community Partnership.

ii) Next Steps

Tom Crowley referred to the attached report and in particular the forthcoming consultation on the draft SCS. Members agreed that it would be a good opportunity to pull in other 'seldom heard' groups such as businesses, faith groups etc.

5. HDCP Self-Assessment ('Progress through Partnership') (Copy circulated with agenda)

Julian introduced this item. Almost as soon as LSPs started to emerge in 2001-2, the Government wanted to evaluate them. In 2005, a report was produced on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (no longer functioning; LSP matters now handled by the Department for Communities and Local Government) setting out a number of recommendations for the development and support of LSPs. As a result, 'Progress through Partnership' (PTP) emerged to support LSPs in the South East region and help them to respond to the needs of their communities. One of the ways PTP does this is to offer a central fund that LSPs can draw from for work to address their own development needs - not to spend on projects. In 2008/09, the fund will offer £4,000 to every LSP in the region. To acquire the funding, each partnership has to complete a self assessment form designed by PTP and then apply for funding to address the areas of weakness identified through the self-assessment process. The deadline for applications is the end of the month (November 08).

David Holmes explained that, as time was short, some members of the Task Group had completed the self assessment on behalf of HDCP, a copy of which was attached to the agenda. It was agreed that the Partnership, sooner or later, would have had to carry out a self-assessment to ensure it was fit for the purpose of delivering the SCS, so this is time well spent.

David had helpfully distilled the main points of the self-assessment into a list of strengths and weaknesses (this was tabled). Julian was asked to go ahead and submit an application on behalf of HDCP for the full £4,000 focussing on the main issues that needed to be addressed, but keeping detail to a minimum. The Chairman thanked David Holmes for the work he had done in relation to the self-assessment.

Action: Julian Carrington

6. Contribution and status of the Theme Groups – to highlight their achievements and establish which are still meeting

i) 'Outcomes for Local People of the work of HDCP' – Report to the Social Inclusion Working Group reviewing the achievements of HDCP – for information (attached to agenda)

ii) Notes of the Social Inclusion Working Group meeting held on 5th November 2008 – for information (attached to agenda)

iii) Latest 2008-09 Action Plans from Older Persons, Young Persons, and Housing Theme Groups – for information (attached to agenda)

Julian Carrington drew attention to the work of the District Council's Social Inclusion Working Group, a sub-group of the District Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee, which was reviewing the achievements of the Community Partnership. The Working Group was considering 'achievements' in the broadest sense, including the ability of the Partnership to function as a unit given its voluntary nature, but was particularly interested in work that led to improved outcomes for local people. The Working Group acknowledged that the Partnership delivered its priority actions through theme groups.

A discussion followed on the current status of the theme groups. Of the original ten, there are currently six active theme groups underpinning the Board, including Transport which has recently reconvened after a gap of two years. The Board agreed that there is no longer a need to continue with ten theme groups given the difficulties identified in the officer's report to the Social Inclusion Working Group of sustaining so many groups. It was also clear that too many groups can dilute their effectiveness and place an excessive burden on those involved. However, members felt it was essential to have a Business Theme Group and that a relevant partner should be identified to re-start the group which is currently inactive.

It was also felt that the CDRP structure, which flows from WSCC to the districts and boroughs, was a model to follow if possible. Once it is clear what HDCP's priorities will be under the new Strategy, a manageable number of appropriate theme groups should be recognised/established and all efforts made to join up with countywide groups/structures to avoid duplication and achieve maximum synergies.

Members requested that all active theme groups should have a partner to represent them at HDCP Board Meetings.

Action: Julian Carrington/Theme Group Co-ordinators

7. Partner Updates

i) Health & Wellbeing Partnership

Chris Dier explained that the Executive of the new health partnership had met and agreed terms of reference. The PCT had been very supportive and would be allocating funds to the partnership for co-commissioning work. Progress will be reported to the Board.

ii) Rural Towns' Forum

Leo Jago advised that the 5 Town's Forum is now known as the Rural Towns Forum. Within the Forum there is concern about SEEDA's conditions for releasing LEADER funds for supporting local economic activity which seem very tight.

There will be a presentation on the West Sussex 'Greening Campaign' by the independent campaign organisers at the next Rural Towns' Forum meeting in January. This campaign is intended to help local communities and individuals to reduce their carbon footprint. So far, among local councils, WSCC, Chichester and Horsham District Councils have agreed to promote the campaign in their areas.

Leo gave a brief update for each of the local community partnerships.

Members reiterated that it is important to integrate the work of the District Partnership with that of the local community partnerships including through the work of the theme groups.

8. Any other business

David Holmes updated the board with the current status of the Transport Theme Group. The group's new priorities have been agreed and would be circulated to the Board for information.

Claire Armstrong requested that she become a member of the Health & Wellbeing Partnership. The Citizens Advice Bureau has an office in the new Children and Families Centre at Billingshurst, which includes a children's playing area.

Gary Shipton commented on the impact of the economic downturn on the District. After Christmas, many local retailers will be struggling to survive. 2009 will be a difficult year. There is a need to bring local businesses together under the aegis of the Community Partnership to show support and point them in the direction of help, eg business surgeries.

Les Ampstead advised of a programme in Pulborough, triggered by the arrival of Tescos, which provides training for small businesses on stock taking, financial control etc. It has achieved good results and may be something to consider for the rest of the District.

Liz Kitchen mentioned the Sun Alliance business breakfasts as a good example of bringing local business leaders together to share and try to solve issues and concerns.

The Board agreed that representatives of the main business umbrella groups in the District as well as individual businesses including those in the rural towns should be invited to meet as early as possible in 2009 to discuss the problems facing local businesses and what practical steps the Community Partnership can take to assist.

Action: Julian Carrington

9. Dates of Next Meetings:

Tuesday 17th February 2009, 4.00pm

Wednesday 1st April 2009, 4.00pm