

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of a Meeting of the East Devon Local Strategic Partnership held in the Committee Room, East Devon District Council on Wednesday, 18th July 2007

Present:	Councillor Sara Randall Johnson (Chairman)	East Devon District Council
	Faith Jarrett (Headteacher) [Speaker]	The Kings School, Ottery St. Mary
	Councillor Jill Elson (Communities Portfolio holder)	East Devon District Council
	Councillor Stuart Hughes	Devon County Council
	Councillor Mrs. Margaret Rogers	Devon County Council
	Councillor Chris Tratt	East Devon District Council
	Peter Jeffs (Culture)	East Devon District Council
	John Golding (Housing)	East Devon District Council
	Matt Dickins (Planning)	East Devon District Council
	Roger Grainger	Devon County Council
	Malcolm Sherry (Business Sector)	East Devon Chamber of Commerce
	Marilyn Fearon (Voluntary Sector)	East Devon CVS
	Becky Carmichael (PCT)	Devon PCT
	Chris Hartrick	Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
	Eli Pang (Older people)	AGILE and Ottery St. Mary and District Later Life Forum
	Robin Kanarek	Faith
Apologies:	Chief Inspector Jim Nye	Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

The meeting started at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 11.30 a.m.

The Chairman welcomed all present and then asked for introductions.

The outgoing Chairman then paid tribute to the Fire and Police Services for their excellent work in containing the whole issue regarding the MSVC Napoli. She said the work had been fantastic.

***104 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the East Devon Local Strategic Partnership held on the 4th April 2007 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Peter Jeffs advised that (Minute 101 (Page 4) Vision of Honiton) the Officers Group had met with representatives of the MCTi (Market and Coastal Towns Initiative) and discussed their key items on the action plan. The MCTi is now very keen to see work on the sports hub commencing and the production of a feasibility study and bid for funding. EDDC will look at feasibility study and in the meantime have put MCTi in touch with other organisations re visioning exercise.

*105 **Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Peter Jeffs called for nominations:

Appointed as Chairman	Cllr Sara Randall Johnson
(Proposed Cllr Jill Elson	Seconded Malcolm Sherry)

Appointed as Vice Chairman	Becky Carmichael
(Proposed Cllr Jill Elson	Seconded Cllr Margaret Rogers)

*106 **School numbers in East Devon**

The Chairman introduced, welcomed and thanked Faith Jarrett, Headteacher at The Kings School, Ottery St. Mary for being able to attend and speak to the LSP on falling schools numbers.

Faith explained that she was only able to relate the situation at The Kings School as the Strategic Planning Officer, Devon County Council, who could speak County-wide on this subject, was unable to attend.

Faith advised that for many years now schools have been under considerable pressure as being told constantly that school numbers are predicted to fall. The birth rate was falling in Devon and this made it difficult when planning school registration and housing needs.

Faith advised that that a particular problem is parents educating their children privately but then return them back into the secondary schools which made it difficult to plan.

Faith advised that there was an enormous influx of people to East Devon. She quoted Ottery St. Mary as an example where people moving to Ottery are moving by choice and often to be close to the facilities. She advised that it is difficult for people to predict that this migration has put on schools. East Devon is by far the biggest problem in that resources are being stretched. This year the Kings School has been put into a situation where more children have had to be taken on, but still there are insufficient places. She felt that people who live in the area (catchment) have a right to be educated in their area.

Faith explained that admission numbers are set by the County Council and for the last 3 years The Kings School have taken on 180 pupils (in groups of 30) but unable to do this when there is not a teacher space.

Faith advised that temporary classrooms were being considered in an effort to avoid disappointed students and a planning application had been submitted for 3 temporary classrooms. She said that if approval for these units were not forthcoming the new September term would be a 4 day week. The temporary classrooms can be sited but then other problems exist e.g. no outside play space, nowhere to have a fire drill. Students have to be taken into a car park for the fire drill which is across a road.

Working closely with other schools who are also under the same pressure which children often leaving and being educated in the private sector. These are long term problems which will not dissipate. Faith said that in 3 – 5 years time children will be struggling to be educated.

In response to a question on boys levels of attainment, Faith confirmed that boys out performed the girls last year and Faith was now looking at improving the girls performance. Faith advised that 68% of her pupils went onto higher education (University) and 20% onto some form of employment with training but very few (5%) went direct into education with training and very few went into employment without training.

*107 **“Planning together – LSPs and Spatial Planning – a practical guide”**

At this point of the meeting the Chairman asked Matt Dickins to talk about the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and to give some idea of the worse case scenario on the numbers of houses to be built which would have a bearing on our current discussion on school numbers.

Matt advised that the RSS will set the regional context for planning in the South West until 2026. It will:

- Guide the planning process at a local level – in District Local Development Frameworks
- Help deliver the region’s integrated regional strategy guide
- Include a Regional Transport Strategy to guide investment in transport facilities
- Provide policy guidance on issues ranging from minerals extraction and waste treatment to
- economic development and housing, health, culture, environment; and
- including District level housing numbers

Matt explained that the planning document is produced by the Regional Assembly (covering an area from Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire to the Isles of Scilly) and sets out the regional development of growth for the years ahead.

Spatial strategy across Devon shows that:

- there is growing population driven by migration
- there is a need for households as average household size reducing
- East Devon is a highly desirable area to live
- this is a popular retirement area
- a lot of people live in East Devon and work in Exeter
- there is a shortage of housing land
- there is pressure to build from developers
- Cranbrook is the most sensible area to build a new settlement

Matt explained that the RSS was now looking at the year 2026. The Office for National Statistics have completed a new set of statistics which show that numbers initially proposed already actually need to increase. East Devon’s growth is concentrated on the fringe of its boundary at present with pressure on Cranbrook to deliver up to 6,000 homes in Devon. Now we may need to be looking at other areas and possibly other new communities being discussed. Growth might increase dramatically and EDDC needs to respond to this as currently looking at 500 dwellings being built in East Devon excluding Cranbrook.

Matt then referred to his flow chart (attached to the agenda – East Devon Local Development Framework Core Strategy leading to Area Action Plans) which arose out of “Planning Together” a Government guide. The guide offers practical advice to local authorities on how to work most effectively with strategic partners in the shaping of sustainable, mixed communities. The guide –

- is written in non planning terms
- picks up issue of community planning, plans, aspirations, problems and opportunities
- shows how we look at land allocations – partnership driven
- defines how we deliver services, and
- encourages getting information in at an early stage

Matt advised that the Local Development Framework approach comprises a number of documents which include the 'core strategy' which sets out the overall vision. This is an over arching document that will guide other documents.

Matt then referred back to flow chart and briefly discussed the bullet points which highlighted the work that the Council has got involved in. The bottoms 3 boxes on the left side are statistical processes that Planning have to go through. The Government is looking to simplify these. The top 2 boxes on the left of the paper show the areas we want to concentrate on.

Matt advised that workshops were being set up with Members with the aim of getting their involvement and one of the issues to come out of this will be affordable housing.

After this contextual information we then returned to the issue of school rolls:

- Kings School was not big enough
- Can the LSP help
- Consider surrounding land - possibly rerouting the main road
- LSP needs to say what individual members want – affordable housing, employment etc
- Positive thinking through LDF process needed
- Evidence from Ottery St. Mary to enable looking at other sites
- People want to move into the area because Kings School performing very well
- Strong feelings coming from The Ottery St. Mary Community Group as to Ottery's future
- LSP perfect forum to get involved in this

Roger Grainger said that an additional complicating factor in predicting pupil numbers was parental choice. Clearly, the success being achieved by pupils at Kings School will have contributed to the pressure on admissions. He went on to say that a letter had been sent to all East Devon County Councillors from the school admission planners - the 'Way We Work Team' of the 'Children and Young People's Services' at County Hall - (letter attached). The letter provides summary information on pupil numbers for East Devon schools, future trends and some of the issues arising.

Footnote: Funding for schools was a key factor in being able to effect change and Devon's pupil funding (£3,551.33 per pupil unit of funding = 6.5% pupil increase) did not fare well in comparison with the rest of the country. The full list of comparisons can be found at this weblink (Devon is reference at 878).

The Chairman thanked Faith for attending and said she would ask the Officers Group to have a look at the wider picture.

The Chairman said that through the LDF process positive thinking as to what we can do was needed together with evidence from Ottery St. Mary. EDDC would then look at other viable sites.

Jill Elson said Exmouth Joint Forum was looking at pieces of land for expanding Exmouth College (eg Rolle College land) and she wanted the LSP to help form a sub-committee like the Exmouth Joint Forum as Education and Health was missing.

Summary

Peter summarised the discussion by saying that the LSP is about linking issues together and not about individual geographic issues. The issue of The Kings School has highlighted the links between the economy, workforce of tomorrow, land and transport issues, the ecological impact, social issues etc.

Matt's paper includes a mechanism that we can get involved in and address some of the issues, the key issue being spatial planning. The LSP can link the spatial planning with social planning.

Peter also said that the Planning 'Statement of Community Involvement' has just been released and our Members should have a look at the document and ask if we are going about consultation in the right way.

Referring to the LDF work and the need for the LSP to make the appropriate connections, Roger felt that the time was right to start thinking about how we move this debate on and highlighted the potential for the LSP to take a co-ordinating role in relation to the variety of locality initiatives being developed. Honiton MCTi, neighbourhood policing and the Senior Council were given as examples.

*108 **To agree possible dates and venue of future meetings of LSP**

The draft list of possible dates and venue of future meetings were approved.

*109 **Play monies**

Peter reported that at its meeting in October 2006 the LSP considered and adopted the East Devon's Play Strategy which needed updating to allow EDDC to make a bid for lottery funding. The updated version had to be based on a great deal of consultation work and was submitted as part of the Big Lottery which we were successful in securing £204,000 for play schemes which will be rolled out within the next 8 months. Ishbel Ramsey (Arts Development Officer – EDDC) will be delivering the play schemes.

*110 **Seaton Project Business Plan**

Peter referred to the Seaton Town Youth Council 'Fun in the Sun 2007' Business Plan which he was pleased to say looked positive. He then drew members attention to the list of dates of events if they wanted to diarise these.

*111 **Any other business**

Visioning

The Chairman mentioned that following the recent and useful visioning exercises held at EDDC recently various themes of work came out of these exercises. She said that when EDDC looked at the Housing Benefit processes and how we communicated with these, teams had problems delivering the service, handing money out etc. and she felt this was maybe an area the LSP could help EDDC to improve its services.

The Chairman said that whilst staff are at customer's houses they could look at other issues and assess whether they need help in other areas, without a series of staff visiting. That one member of staff can then identify those needs and that one member of staff becoming involved, rather than 3 – 4 members of staff going to visit on separate business.

The Chairman said there was a need to ask the Officer Group if there was any possibility of developing that theme.

***112 Date and venue of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the East Devon Local Strategic Partnership would be held on Wednesday 10th October 2007 in Room 1.

Signed

Date

Chairman LSP – Councillor Miss Sara Randall Johnson