

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the East Devon Local Strategic Partnership held in the Committee Room, East Devon District Council on Wednesday, 4th March 2009

Present:	Councillor Sara Randall Johnson (Chairman)	East Devon District Council
	Councillor Jill Elson (Communities Portfolio holder)	East Devon District Council
	Councillor Bob Buxton	East Devon District Council/Devon Towns Forum
	Councillor Margaret Rogers	Devon County Council
	Councillor Barry Nicholson	Devon County Council
	Councillor Stuart Hughes	Devon County Council
	Peter Jeffs (Culture)	East Devon District Council
	Matt Dickins (Planning)	East Devon District Council
	Superintendent Phil Kennedy	LPA Commander - Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
	Roger Grainger	Devon County Council
	Rev. Peter Brain	United Reformed
	Helen Harman	East Devon VSA
	Chris Mills (Speaker)	South West Water
	Simon Smale (Speaker)	East Devon District Council
	Sue Parkinson	Secretariat

The meeting started at 9.30 a.m. and ended at 10.45 a.m.

***20 Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2009**

The Minutes of the meeting of the East Devon Local Strategic Partnership held on the 26 November 2008 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

***22 Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Becky Carmichael	Devon PCT
Elli Pang	AGILE/Ottery St. Mary & District Later Life Forum
Liz Wood	DCC Learning Disabilities
John Golding	East Devon District Council
Simon Wood	Chamber of Commerce

***23 Local Development Framework – “Core Strategy” and “Issues and Options report” update**

Matt Dickins led a discussion about the East Devon Development Framework Core Issues and Option document, and reported that EDDC had received about 500 representations but there were quite a number of key agencies locally who seem not to have engaged with the process, indeed the agency reps around our table were unaware of the representations of their own agencies.

Matt said that they will endeavour to directly approach those agencies who have not responded, but it was felt that LDF opportunities and importance may not be sufficiently recognised in key local agencies.

The question however also arose at the LSP as to whether the DSP have been seeking to gather together the views of County and sub-regionally based organisations to ensure that these are fed into the various LDF processes across the County. Obviously the DSP (as does our own LSP) has a role to collate, and integrate strategic views for the future benefit of local communities. The LDF process therefore seems an important and pivotal process.

The Chairman thanked Matt for his update.

*24 **Presentation on helping older people with water services and charges now and in the future (at the request of Elli Pang).**

Chris Mills, Senior Communications Officer, to South West Water spoke to speak to the LSP on ways in which SWW can help older people with water services and charges. Chris then ran through his power point presentation:

- “Serving older people”
Significant customer group. SWW reliant on customers self-identifying as ‘older’. SWW has no access to electoral or benefit records).
- “What we can and can’t do”
SWW able to offer tailored services based on need, but unable to offer tariffs or reductions based on age, and cannot discriminate or cross-subsidise to favour one customer group. Chris said that much of what they can do to help is aimed at all customers but probably does impact more on the elderly.
- “Priority needs register”
SWW able to offer help with services for those with disability, illness or mobility problem. Can arrange water deliveries, work warnings, phone bill readings/large print and Braille bills.
- “The metering option”
SWW meter switches will save average of £400 each this year and advice is given on potential savings. Customers can switch back within a year. An ‘assessed charge’ is pegged to average bills which helps those in flats and sheltered housing. However metering will not suit all. 20% of SWW customers are still unmetered.
- “WaterCare – help for those in most need”
SWW offer meter and benefit checks, with the option of flexible payment plus water audits and free water saving devices. First company in country to provide this service and have been praised by the Water Minister and nominated for an industry award. SWW ensure claimants can claim benefits and take referrals from CAB, and charitable organisations etc.
- “WaterCare – Case Study”
Chris said as a case study to promote watercare, SWW were able to help an elderly couple from Plymouth by fitting five water saving devices, and the couple were able to claim £300 per month in extra benefits.
- WaterSure tariff
Chris said that the anticipated national tariff may replace the ‘social tariff’ and be the tariff of the future. Helps customers on certain benefits (including pension credit) who have medical need to use extra water or have three children at home. Currently SWW Cap bill at regional average - £497 in 2009/2010 (capping at national average would reduce bills further.
- “Help in the future”

- Rising block tariff trial – 27% discount for essential use block (popular with pensioner group). Extension of ‘affordability’ schemes.
 - Extension of ‘affordability’ schemes
 - Watercare adopted nationally perhaps with national levy
 - WaterSure pegged to national average bill?
 - Universal metering by government being considered
 - South West Water commitment to ‘stable prices’
- “More direct help”
SWW working with pensioner groups, CAB and charities across region to distribute metering and water and conservation advice. Pensioner groups involved in stakeholder forums and special assistance fund for individual cases (bereavement etc). Charitable grants available for care homes/pensioner/garden groups to buy water-saving devices (butts, flush reducers).

Chris concluded by saying that water use per person per day in the South West is the lowest in the country. Bills throughout the country are due to rise but SWW bills remain stable. SWW has the best record of any company in the country (17% compared to 19% in Britain).

Peter Jeffs asked what can the LSP do as a group to help you promote these benefits and secondly help lobby for the government changes? Chris replied that SWW would welcome referrals from customers.

The Chairman thanked Chris for his presentation and it was agreed a copy of SWW’s information be placed in the “East Devon Talk”.

*25 **Progress report on gypsies and travellers in East Devon (at the request of Cllr Mrs. Margaret Rogers)**

Simon Smale explained the role of the District Council in relation to its new duty to provide gypsy and traveller sites. The Housing Act 2004 required local authorities to carry out gypsy and traveller accommodation needs assessments as part of its general housing needs assessments. East Devon DC joined with all Local Authorities in Devon and carried out a survey. The survey highlighted the need for a total of 9 additional pitches, the need to provide some sort of transit for travellers and the need to identify land.

In line with the Regional Spatial Strategy timescale this need was projected as rising from 9 to 14 by 2026. ODPM Circular 1/2006 requires local authorities to prepare a development plan to allocate sites for gypsy and traveller use and develop criteria for considering planning applications on non-allocated sites.

The Planning Service started work on this document in May 2008 and after a series of consultation processes it is hoped it will be completed in 2010. In the meantime a cross party Think Tank met with local travellers and visited working sites and working on the criteria for establishing new sites. Over the last 6 – 8 months a number of sites have been identified of which we now have a shortlist of 4. Initial contact has been made with the owners of those sites and a report will be put to the next Development Control Committee on the 10th March 2009 giving an update on those contacts and how the Council wants to proceed.

The Leader thanked Simon for his progress report.

*26 **Update on:**

a) **Devon Warm Zones**

Simon Smale said that following Meryl Spencer's presentation to the November 2008 meeting of the LSP on the Devon Warm Zones there were a few action points which Meryl said she would report back to this meeting.

They were:

"Meryl to report back to Cllr Mrs Rogers direct on tackling pre payment meters"

Simon reported that Meryl wrote to Councillor Mrs. Rogers explaining that the matter appeared to be firmly in the sight of the government and OFGEM and therefore we hope to hear in 2009 that further action will be taken to outlaw these meters.

Simon said that Meryl tabled this matter with the Devon regional group who met in February 2009, and will contact Councillor Mrs. Rogers again if there is any further news."

"Meryl agreed to speak to Peter Jeffs re trying to get the local CAB involved in working"

Simon reported that Meryl had spoken with Peter who said he would discuss this further with CAB and get back to Meryl. (NB letter sent to CAB and we have subsequently learned they are supportive).

"Meryl agreed to speak to the Devon Chief Environmental Health Officers' Housing Group and then back to the LSP concerning elderly/blind persons receiving mail advertising free insulation and was there any assistance for them."

Simon said that Meryl raised this at the Devon Chief Environmental Health Officers' Housing Group and is also being raised with Action for the Blind partners who said they would be guiding us on requirements.

(b) **Elderly blind persons receiving mail advertising free insulation but unable to read**

Helen Harman gave an update on this subject following her kind offer to speak direct to Devon LINK to see if they were able to offer any assistance or give practical suggestions of how the issue of might be addressed. Helen said that the matter will be brought to the Devon Link steering group which will be meeting this week. The steering group consists of 12 organisations including the RNIB, Action for the Blind, and Vision. Helen said she would report back to the April meeting of the LSP.

*27 **Any other business**

- 1) Councillor Mrs. Margaret Rogers referred to the previous item (Min 26b) and asked what might be done to go beyond the mail advertising. Helen Harman agreed to take Councillor Mrs. Margaret Rogers' issue to the EDVSA.
- 2) Councillor Miss Jill Elson raised the issue of transition from children's services to adult services and referred specifically to children under care moving into adult care and that there was a problem going from one to another. Complex care teams – how are they working – new managers of complex care scheme. Suggested and agreed that we get someone in to talk to us about this at a future LSP.

- 3) Peter Jeffs asked if Jamie Buckley, the Council's Engagement and Funding Officer could come to a meeting of the LSP and give a presentation on the "Place" survey. It was agreed Jamie be invited to a meeting of the LSP.

***28 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 8th April at 9.30 a.m. in Room 1. (The Committee Room unavailable due to election preparation)

(Diary reminder LSP AGM 15th July 2009 – 9.30 Committee Room)

Signed

Date

Chairman LSP – Councillor Miss Sara Randall Johnson