

MEETING OF THE WEST DEVON LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

**HELD ON THURSDAY 22 JULY 2010 at 9.30 am
AT KILWORTHY PARK, TAVISTOCK**

Present: Cllr James McInnes (West Devon LSP Chairman); Dotty Allan (LSP Co-Ordinator), Kerry Booth – Improvement Officer, (West Devon Borough Council); Sonia Burgess and Malcolm MacDonald (Devon County Council), Inspector David Antill (Devon & Cornwall Constabulary) Keith Pascoe (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue); Tina Henry (Devon PCT); Karen Nolan (CVS), David Parlby (LSP Business Representative).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Steven Caddie, Christopher Kirwin, Max Laithwaite, (TAVi), Jo Rumble (Dartmoor National Park), Louisa Wall (Community Safety Officer, West Devon Borough Council.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING/MATTERS ARISING

(a) Devon Games to Inspire

It was reported that this event had been a success and that West Devon had won the event overall.

3. TRANSPORT ISSUES AS A RESULT OF PLACE SURVEY

The place survey which had been held in 2008 had shown that the satisfaction levels with public transport in West Devon were lower than those in other areas of the County. It had therefore been agreed that the LSP should do some investigations into this to find out exactly what people were dissatisfied with, e.g. was it the services themselves, the information provided on services, etc. A survey had therefore been prepared and distributed to various organisations. These organisations had then distributed the survey to members of the public for completion. A National Highways Transport survey had also taken place and the relevant results for the West Devon area were presented to the Group. It was agreed the Group should now look at what had been found from the survey and which areas could be worked on to try and improve the situation. It was noted that place surveys had now been abolished, meaning it would not be possible to make comparisons between 2008 figures and the next survey.

Regarding the national survey, it was reported that relatively good responses had been received from the Tavistock and Okehampton areas. People in the Tavistock area were more satisfied with the bus services available. It was felt the Okehampton area was a more rural area and it had been found that people in this area were more satisfied with specialist services which were available. Regarding the LSP survey, it was reported that 250 responses had been received. It was agreed that this was quite a low level of response and the Group were disappointed that a higher response had not been received. However, it was felt that the results of the survey did show what they had been expected to show.

The survey had been distributed both on line and on paper. It was reported that in Tavistock the split between filling in paper copies and online copies was around 50/50 whilst in Okehampton more paper copies had been received. It was also felt that many of the people who had responded to the survey were older people, meaning it did not show the views of younger people. It was felt that one area in which further work could be undertaken would be to try and identify those areas where there were particular concerns. The responses to the survey included postcodes so it was hoped to look at the results, produce maps of the areas concerned and then try and determine where the major areas of concern were. Further work to improve transport services in these areas could then hopefully be undertaken by the LSP. However, in general it was felt that the low level of response to the survey meant that not enough evidence had been collected to allow further action to be taken.

It was also agreed that work undertaken and information received through Parish Plans could be used when looking at transport issues. Questions could be included in plans relating to transport to try and obtain further views. The LSP Coordinator reported that an analysis of Parish Plans in both West Devon and South Hams was currently taking place so this issue could be included in this. Work was also being undertaken with the Community Council of Devon. Parish plans would be available to view on the web once the analysis had been completed. Board members were also reminded that all parish plans submitted in West Devon now went through the LSP protocol. The Community Council of Devon had also been informed of this protocol. It was felt that, although no further place surveys would be taking place, it would still be important for individual organisations to undertake surveys which would ask the same type of questions to ensure information from the public was obtained.

Regarding undertaking work to try and determine issues in specific areas, it was reported that there had been some resource implications. However, these had now been sorted and some funding was available to allow this work to take place. The Group felt that this work would be very useful and agreed that it should go ahead. It was also felt that the Ward specific information which had been produced by the Council from the place survey should be used. It was agreed that it would be useful for the results of the LSP survey to be circulated. Another area which had been covered by the survey was public transport fares.

Regarding the National Transport survey, the results of the 2009 survey were now available. The 2010 survey was currently taking place. It was hoped that the combined response figures to the two surveys would help give a better idea of people's concerns regarding public transport. It was reported that maps showing the various areas within Devon and comparing information in these areas were currently being produced. These would be circulated when completed. It was agreed that a report on progress would be brought to the next Board meeting.

Some information it was felt it may be useful to obtain included numbers of people using current bus services, the ways in which organisations had distributed the LSP survey to the public and how people could be encouraged to reduce car use and make more use of public transport.

4. LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

These were being introduced by the Government and would be replacing Rural Development Agencies. They would involve both businesses and Local Authorities. Both the Chamber of Commerce and Local Authority Chief Executives had been undertaking a lot of work regarding the setting up of these new Partnerships. The feeling was that the South West Rural Development Agency was too big in its present form and therefore needed to be split. The Chamber of Commerce was currently collecting information from the business community. It was felt that the new Partnerships should concentrate on the main areas of activity such as central towns. These would be the hub of the Partnerships. It was not expected that the Government would be providing any funding for the running of the Partnerships. Ways in which these could be funded were therefore currently being considered. One suggestion for the future was that all local businesses should become a member of the Chamber of Commerce. They would then pay an annual subscription fee which would help fund the Partnerships. It was reported this scheme was operated in France and worked very well. Responses needed to be submitted to the Government by 9 September. W now needed to take place with regard to looking at setting up priorities for a Devon and Cornwall Partnership.

On the Council side, it was reported that the Borough Council had contacted Devon County Council and work was currently taking place with regard to the setting up of a Partnership. It was agreed that it was important for Councils to have an input into the new Partnerships. It was not clear exactly how West Devon businesses were being involved at this stage. It was reported a meeting was due to be held next week which would be discussing the functions of the Partnerships. It was not yet known how a joint submission for Devon and Cornwall businesses would be arranged.

It was reported that a meeting between the Devon and Cornwall Heads of Economic Development was shortly taking place. It was agreed that this issue should therefore be discussed with them to clarify how this process would work. It was recognised that the timescale for submissions was tight and it was therefore important that work progressed as quickly as possible.

5. JUNIOR LIFE SKILLS

This was an annual event which took place at Okehampton Camp. However, it was reported that money this year was tight and any contributions from organisations would be welcomed. Exact figures were not known but it was thought the shortfall at this stage was between £1,500 and £2,000. This figure would be provided as soon as possible. It was reported that the cost of the venue was high and it would therefore be necessary to look at finding an alternative venue for next year's event. It was felt that the event was popular, useful and should continue if at all possible. It was reported that a survey would be taking place in February. This would hopefully find out what those taking part had remembered about the event and also find out if they felt anything further could be added. It was reported that this year's event would include a session on Internet bullying. There would also be a chance for those taking part to speak to someone about any bullying issues they may be experiencing. It was suggested that some of the services for future events could possibly be outsourced. However, it was stated that the main problem with this would be finding the resources to involve outside organisations.

6. CHILDREN'S TRUST UPDATE

It was reported that funding had now been received which would enable the Trust to continue until March next year. However, it was doubtful whether any funding would be received after this. Work was currently taking place regarding the determining of priorities. One priority which was receiving a lot of attention was healthy weight. This looked at healthy diet, exercise, etc.

Regarding the Local Transaction Project, it was reported that funding from the Children's Fund had been granted. However, this funding had now been cut/withdrawn, meaning the contract would now end in October of this year instead of continuing until March. It was felt that the way in which this funding had been reduced had not been handled well as no consultation had taken place. It was accepted that the funding would most likely have ended after this initial grant but the way the funding had suddenly been withdrawn had meant the planned work could not go ahead.

The Children's Trust also requested that more Police involvement was received. There had been no Police representative present at the last few meetings.

7. SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

Chief Executive – it was reported that the selection process for a new shared Chief Executive for West Devon and South Hams had taken place this week. Both Councils would be holding meetings with their Members next week to approve the selection. The selection process had involved various exercises including a Community Panel and a Stakeholder Panel. It was anticipated the new Chief Executive would start in December.

Joint LSP – a survey had been distributed to both the West Devon and South Hams LSP Boards. It was felt responses to this had been good. It was reported that 8 responses had been received from West Devon and 10 from South Hams. Results of the survey would be circulated. Issues which it was felt needed to be looked at included how information was reported back to the Board and how it was reported to the public, closer working with the Devon Strategic Partnership, the way in which the Board was scrutinised and the outcomes of stakeholder engagement. Work was now taking place regarding the setting of priorities. The issue had been taken to the relevant Committees/Executive Groups of both Councils. Staff had also been consulted on the issue and some useful feedback had been received. It was agreed that it would be important to clarify the Member role in the new joint LSP as this was currently handled differently by both Councils.

When setting priorities, it was agreed that information which had already been obtained should be used. This would include information collected through Parish planning. A draft structure for the new LSP had also now been produced. It was now proposed that a joint priority setting exercise would take place. This would involve both LSP Boards getting together and discussing the future priorities. It was proposed this meeting would take place on 13 September at 2 pm. The South Hams LSP Board had planned to hold their regular meeting on this day and it was therefore agreed the priority setting exercise would replace this meeting. It was requested that all Partners now provide a list of their priorities. This information would then be used when setting up the new priorities for the LSP. A joint Member exercise would take place after the two Boards had met.

It was agreed that numbers of representatives on the new Board would also need to be considered. It would not be possible to have representatives from both areas at Board meetings. It was suggested that one representative for each organisation should attend each meetings. However, no final decisions had yet been made regarding this.

It was recognised that, due to reductions in funding, some organisations may not be able to keep going in the future. It would therefore be necessary to look at how the work undertaken by these organisations could be covered by the LSP.

Once the priorities had been set up and the new LSP was up and running, there would be one Sustainable Community Strategy which would cover both Councils. It was also felt it was important that the current Delivery Groups were involved in the process of setting up priorities.

7. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT/DEVON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

It was reported that a re-structure of the DSP had now taken place. The leader of Devon County Council was now the Chair of the DSP. It was felt that discussions were required on how Local Authorities communicated with the public. It was felt this could be done through Council magazines. It was reported that Devon County Council were currently undertaking work to look at future Partnerships and the future of Delivery Agreements. It was reported that a Community Wellbeing event was due to take place in September. However, the Group's feeling was that this event should not go ahead at this stage as the priorities would not yet have been set.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

VAT and Charities – an E-mail had been received regarding the issue of VAT and charities. The two issues which needed to be addressed were exemptions and the raising of VAT. It was reported that a survey had now been distributed to try and find out how these issues would affect charities in the area. Survey results needed to be submitted by the end of next week.

9. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

This had now been completed.

10. NEXT MEETING

14 October 2010, 9.30 am, Meeting Room 3, Kilworthy Park..