

These minutes will be ratified at the next meeting of the CPIG to be held on 16 June 2006

**MINUTES of MEETING of the
COMMUNITY PLANNING
IMPLEMENTATION GROUP held at
HADDINGTON on 14 FEBRUARY
2006**

Councillors in Attendance

Cllr P O'Brien
Cllr N Murray
Cllr N Hampshire
Cllr W Innes
Cllr G Meikle

Officer Attendance:

Mr J Lindsay, Chief Executive
Mr J Lamond, Head of Policy and Business Management
Mr A Blackie, Director of Education and Children's Services
Mr P Collins, Director of Environment
Mr A McCrorie, Director of Corporate Finance & IT
Ms J Cochran, Head of Community Support
Mr A Forsyth, Head of Community Housing and Property Management
Mr T Shearer, Head of Community Wellbeing
Ms S Smith, Economic Development Manager
Mr B Duncan, Corporate Policy Manager
Ms S Virdee, Policy Officer

In Attendance:

Mr A Dee, Communities Scotland
Mr S Baxter, Association of Community Councils
Mr D Denholm, Lothian and Borders Police
Mr J Bruce, East Lothian Voluntary Organisations Network
Mr R Flint, NHS Lothian
Ms R Marshall, Queen Margaret University College
Mr J Ryan, Tranent Social Inclusion Partnership
Ms V Noone, Scottish Enterprise
Mr E Stark, Voluntary Development East Lothian

Attending:

Ms K Kelman, Research Assistant
Ms S Hervey (clerk)

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Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllr J Ross, Mr D White, Mr R Taylor, and Ms W Macadie

1. WELCOME BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND INTRODUCTIONS

John Lindsay outlined the 2 main priorities for the meeting. After the review of Community Planning infrastructure in November 2004, it had been decided that it would be appropriate to refresh these structures. Sharan Virdee would provide an introduction to the new structures later in the meeting. Second, this first meeting of CPIG represented an excellent opportunity to collect partners' opinions on the proposed Public Sector Reform, for which a report had been submitted at Item 5. In order to facilitate a full discussion, attendees would be split into two groups and asked to respond to a series of questions which had been included in a consultation document from the Scottish Executive, including aspects of joined up working and partnership working.

All attendees were asked to introduce themselves to the group.

2. COMMUNITY PLANNING IN EAST LoTHIAN

John Lindsay introduced Sharan Virdee who spoke to the Community Plan. Sharan Virdee outlined her presentation, which would recapitulate the new structures for the Community Planning Implementation Group (CPIG), highlight the dates for communications and meetings this year, and outline the idea for a partnership agreement.

The CPIG had originated from a comprehensive review process of the old construction of community planning, and consultation with all partners. The overriding theory would be that task groups would feed into existing groups within the regional and national agenda. The CPIG itself would be "an overseeing, strategic group established to signpost work within the Partnership". Task groups would fit underneath this body, in order to take forward daily business such as funding applications. This would reduce the amount of business which the CPIG would need to address independently. Affiliated Groups, which were existing Groups such as Community Safety Forum and East Lothian Learning Partnership, would be charged with ensuring that the Community Plan was recognisable at a local level, and identifying projects that had worked well for possible roll out to the whole of East Lothian, such as those successful projects that had been running in Prestonpans and Tranent. One of the most important elements of the CPIG structure would be to make the best use of partners' time by setting the agenda in advance. It had been anticipated that the next meeting's agenda would be dominated by approving the Community Plan. The need for a work plan was related to the 10 year lifespan of the Community Plan. Work plans would reduce this to a more manageable 3 year period.

2a. ELCPP MEETING/COMMUNICATION OUTLINE

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There had been difficulties identified with the previous arrangements as a result of a lack of communication, as no regular pieces of information had been circulated. Dates of meetings for this year had been supplied with the papers for the meeting, and dates for newsletter publications should also be noted. In order to make sure that task groups were operating efficiently, community sessions would also be held from time to time; one would be scheduled for May or June 2006. The annual conference would be held in partnership with East Lothian Learning Partnership as before. Web-based information had also been in development, in order to facilitate a free flow of information. A mapping exercise of all partners and groups engaged with Community Planning, their level of engagement, and a contact for each group had been being carried out. This had been identified as a potentially important exercise which would be an excellent tool to take Community Planning forward in the future.

2b. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Sharan Virdee explained that during the consultation process it had been clear that many partners were not aware of their own roles and remits, and it had been felt that to outline those could be helpful. With this in mind, it had been decided that all partners should enter into a partnership agreement. A draft would be circulated at the next meeting for review by partners. Partners would benefit from knowing what was expected of them within the parameters of Community Planning.

2c. COMMUNITY PLAN

Sharan Virdee introduced the draft Community Plan which had been tabled at the meeting. She emphasised that the Plan was linked to the 2020 vision, within the context of regional, national and local issues. The overarching aim of the plan was to express what partners wished to achieve. Sharan Virdee asked all partners to carry out consultations within their own agencies, and advised that the plan would also be taken to community groups to ensure that it reflected the needs of those communities. She hoped to have the plan finalised by Easter.

In closing, Sharan Virdee referred partners to the dates of the CPIG meetings, and extended sessions; requested that they agreed in principle to the creation of a formal Partnership Agreement; and asked that any gaps in the Community Plan were forwarded to the Policy Team by 3 March 2006.

Alan Blackie asked if the consultation period for the Community Plan could be extended, as a deadline of 3 March 2006 would not give much time for feedback to be collated. Sharan Virdee replied that the deadline would not be absolute, but if an idea of possible changes could be forwarded by then this would suffice. Councillor Hampshire asked if the timescale was related to the local authority reform deadline, it was confirmed that this was an entirely separate issue.

John Lindsay confirmed that the partnership agreement would appear within the Community Plan, and intimated that outlining roles and remits for all partners would

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constitute best practice. The document had been made as meaningful as possible, and targets would need to be identified in order to bring specific measurable objectives to the document.

3. 2020 VISION FOR EAST LoTHIAN

John Lindsay spoke to the item, announcing that the next Best Value Audit would be in 2007, concurrent with Aberdeenshire, Mid Lothian and North Lanarkshire. In preparation for this visit, East Lothian Council had been advised to prepare a mid term vision for themselves as a Council, and an area. Hexagon Consulting & Research had prepared the document in consultation with Community Partners.

Brian Duncan stated that bringing the report to this group had been, in part, in order to report back to those partners who had taken part in the consultation process and workshops. He hoped that partners would recognise their own ideas within the document, and encouraged them to make use of it within their own agencies. He emphasised that it was an aspirational document, and suggested that it should be built into agencies at ground level.

Councillor Murray indicated that the 2020 vision document was not a Council document, as it related to the whole of the community of East Lothian. It had been a result of consultation with local people amongst others, and although it was an ambitious document, it also represented the needs of East Lothian's communities.

Jim Lamond added that other agencies should be using this vision with regards to how it could influence their own planning for the future.

Councillor Innes asserted that it was good for communities to have aspirations, but that all partners would need to commit to them if they were to be achievable. For example, had it been realistic to aim to have a flourishing business economy if there was no scope for this. Similarly the challenges for the education service should be looked at carefully to ascertain whether the targets were deliverable. He felt there was a need to be pragmatic in relation to the 2020 vision document, and that partners such as Communities Scotland would need to be closely involved for the vision to be realised.

John Lindsay replied that he agreed that several factors would need to be in place in order to deliver the vision. He felt that it had been a good idea for the community to put together a document of this kind, and that partners should be aware of the kind of community life that East Lothian residents would aspire to.

4. MORI SURVEY RESULTS

John Lindsay introduced the item, outlining that the survey results had been produced within the last few months.

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Brian Duncan explained that the item had been added to the agenda so that partners could be aware of the potential of the data collected. The project brief from MORI had centred on Quality of Life issues and a wide range of data had been collected. Council Services had also been part of the consultations but this data was not appropriate for this meeting. It had been confirmed that people in East Lothian enjoyed a high quality of life, with 98% of all residents rating East Lothian as a “very good” or “fairly good” place to live. This was the best percentage recorded by MORI during any similar survey of this kind, and had been an excellent endorsement for the area. Respondents were also asked a range of questions relating to public nuisances, with dog fouling remaining the single biggest issue of this kind for East Lothian residents.

Brian Duncan elaborated on the graph towards the end of the report, clarifying that the top bar represented the position from the survey carried out in 2001, and the lower bar represented the position from the 2005 survey. He pointed out to the group that this showed an improvement in instances of low-level crimes such as Dog fouling, Litter and Vandalism, and only a slight increase in reports of Noisy Neighbours. He emphasised that this data was available to all partners should they find it helpful, or wish to obtain better detail from the statistics.

John Lindsay remarked that the MORI results had been a good news story for East Lothian Council, and that as part of best value it had been important to talk to communities to discover what their priorities were.

Jim Lamond added that regarding data availability, he recommended that partners look into whether this could be of use, as a large amount of data had been recorded under a wide range of demographics, including breakdown per ward, per school catchment area, and per town. The data could also be looked into in conjunction with the Household survey, or previous analysis to discover trends. He highlighted that the survey represented a powerful database and that Brian Duncan would be happy to assist should any enquiries be forthcoming.

5. PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

John Lindsay spoke to the item, explaining that it had arisen from a reform agenda promoted by Tom McCabe, minister for Finance and Public Sector Reforms. It had been decided to take the opportunity of asking Local Authorities and Partner Organisations a range of questions, and in order to better facilitate this the group would be split into two separate discussion groups.

Brian Duncan remarked that although the papers could be construed as a negative outlook on the system as it stood, the process had been ongoing since May 2005 and it would be helpful to look at the consultation as an opportunity to contribute to a thoroughly thought through reform. Tom McCabe would be producing a “think piece” by Easter, and in the meantime, it was important to obtain the views of the group.

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John Lindsay outlined some of the ideas for discussion, including a “super Council”, being an elected unified public services council, a possible amalgamation of all the Lothians Councils, or common services functions resulting in a collaborative joint venture approach. COSLA had set the questions sent to all local authorities and were looking for comments to be forwarded to them as soon as possible. Brian Duncan added that all councils would hold meetings similar to this one soon. John Lindsay confirmed that of 32 local authorities, 27 had agreed to produce responses to the document, although the figure had now dropped to 20.

Councillor Murray indicated that he had no doubt that by 2011 the public sector map would have changed, although the nature of these changes remained unclear. The system needed to become better and more effective, but would also need to be controlled at a democratic local level.

Two discussions then took place relating to the Public Sector Reform Report. For a copy of the document produced from these discussions and sent to the Scottish Executive, please contact Brian Duncan in the policy team.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was set for 16 June 2006, 10am, in Conference Rooms One & Two, John Muir House