

Links are in red

From: "Newsham, Pamela" <newshamp@mendip.gov.uk>
To: Mendip LSP"

Cc:

Sent: 20 November 2006 13:35

Attach: 1 Agenda 2811.06.doc; 3 Minutes 26.09.06.doc; 4 CAB Briefing paper for MSP.doc; 6 SCC Community Dev Team.pdf; 8 MSP future developments.doc; 8A LGWP - key issues for MSP.doc; 9 Draft Notes and Actions of Monitoring Group - 16.11.06.doc; 10 MSP Funding Programme.doc

Subject: Mendip Strategic Partnership Board Meeting - 28th November 2006

Dear all

Attached are papers for next week's MSP Board Meeting. The papers which should be attached are as follows:-

AGENDA

- Item 3 Minutes of the previous Board Meeting held on 26th September 2006
- Item 4 Somerset Advice Bureaux (CAB Briefing Paper)
- Item 6 Somerset County Council Community Development Team
- Item 8 MSP Future Developments
- Item 8a LGWP Key Issues for MSP
- Item 9 Monitoring the Five Priorities Action Plans (Draft Notes of the Monitoring Group Meeting held on 16th November)
- Item 10 MSP Funding Programme

Can I just remind everyone that the meeting is scheduled for a PROMPT 2.30pm start.

As ever, visitor parking is extremely limited here at the Council Offices so can I make my usual plea that you park in Commercial Road Car Park which is just 5 minutes' walk away from the Offices (if you need any directions, please ask).

I look forward to seeing you all next week but if you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact either Sara Skirton on 01749 341340 (skirtons@mendip.gov.uk) or myself.

With kind regards.

Pam Newsham
Policy Assistant
(Community Planning and Communications)

Direct Line: 01749 341651
E-mail: newshamp@mendip.gov.uk

Mendip District Council
Cannards Grave Road
Shepton Mallet
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BA4 5BT



Mendip Strategic Partnership
Board Meeting 28 November 2006
2.30pm in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council

Agenda

1. Apologies

2. Public Participation

3. Minutes of the meeting of 26 September 2006

4. Somerset Advice Bureaux

Report from Sonia Pike on the work of the advice bureaux in Somerset

5. Mendip District Council Community Partnerships – feedback from MSP Board members

Verbal report from any Board members who have attended MDC community partnerships

6. Somerset County Council Community Development team role

Brief overview of the role of the team from Andrew Freeman

At 3.15pm:

7. SCC – Proposal for Localisation and the role of frontline Councillors

Alan Jones, the SCC Chief Executive, and Paul Buchanan, the Deputy Leader will attend to present the proposals contained in the paper which was previously circulated

8. MSP Future Developments

Report outlining the developments and opportunities facing the MSP and recommending an outline programme of work to address them

9. Monitoring the Five Priorities Action Plans

Notes of Monitoring Group meeting held on 16 November 2006

10. MSP Funding Programme 2005/06, 2006/07 and MSP's own funds

Report updating the MSP board on the current position for the second homes budget and the MSP's own funds budget and seeking a steer on allocation of remaining 2006/07 monies

11. Shepton 21 Update for information

12. Glastonbury SRB Update for information

13. Any Other Business

14. Dates of future meetings

Proposed MSP Board meeting dates for 2007 are 6 March, 22 May, 18 September and 4 December. All to take place in the Council Chamber at Mendip District Council offices at **2.30pm**

Mendip Strategic Partnership

Minutes of the meeting of the Mendip Strategic Partnership held at 3.00 pm on Tuesday 26 September 2006 in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council

PRESENT:	Ron Ballantine Alan Brunt Pauline Clarke Richard Dixon Stephen Fowler Andrew Freeman Michael Hammond Michelle Hawkes Mark Holden Sharon Jefferies Elizabeth John Ken Maddock Zena Pollard Cicely Postan Elaine Pugsley Paul Richards Tony Shepherd	Chairman Mendip Housing Ltd Somerset County Council Mendip Environment Forum – (Vice Chairman) Elim in Wells (Faith Representative) Somerset County Council Barnardos Mendip Primary Care Trust Somerset County Youth Service Baker Associates Mendip District Council Mendip District Council (for item 7) Mendip Business Exchange Baker Associates National Children’s Home Somerset East Police District Mendip Community Support
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MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS PRESENT:

Stuart Brown Jo Milling Phil Miller Pam Newsham Sara Skirton	Business Manager – Corporate Finance and Resources Senior Policy Officer – Community Planning and Communications Housing Development Officer Policy Assistant Team Leader - Community Planning and Communications
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Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
1	Apologies Apologies were received from Penny Baker, Ian Bennett, Nick Cottle, Roger Kershaw, Scott McMillan, Andy Marsh, Sonia Pike Linda Tucker and Ian Wallace.	
2	Election of Chair and Vice Chair It was proposed by Zena Pollard and seconded by Richard Dixon	

	<p>that Ron Ballantine be nominated as Chair for the forthcoming year. There being no other nominations, he was returned unopposed.</p> <p>It was proposed by Ron Ballantine and seconded by Zena Pollard that Richard Dixon be nominated as Vice-Chair for the forthcoming year. There being no other nominations, he was returned unopposed.</p>	
3	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>Councillor Roy Mackenzie asked the Board whether there was any flexibility in reducing the threshold at which developers are compelled to incorporate affordable housing units into their schemes. He also queried how the Strategic Partnership is being consulted regarding its input into the Local Development Framework process. Richard Dixon confirmed that he represents the MSP on the Council's LDF Operational Group which he attends on the Board's behalf. He also reassured Councillor Mackenzie that close scrutiny of affordable housing as a proportion of total housing numbers has taken place and that affordable housing is one of the MSP's Priority Actions. He informed the Board that the core policy recommendations prepared by the consultants, Baker Associates, will be taken before Cabinet on 2nd October and subsequently to full Council on 9th October.</p> <p>The next stage of the LDF consultation is a separate agenda item and will be discussed at the appropriate part of the meeting.</p>	
4	<p>Minutes of the Meeting on 20 June 2006</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
5	<p>Climate Change Strategy for Mendip</p> <p>Cicely Postan from Baker Associates gave a PowerPoint presentation about climate change issues in the district. Baker Associates had been commissioned by the MSP in March 2006 to investigate what climate change means for Mendip and to produce a strategy based on their findings. This strategy document is expected to be completed by December this year. However, Cicely explained that the Somerset Climate Change Strategy is expected to be published towards the end of December. Although the County's baseline information has been used to inform Mendip's document, there may be merit in waiting for the County's final evidence base. The Board accepted that this might mean an extension of the proposed publication date of Mendip's own Climate Change Strategy.</p>	

	<p>Following Cicely's presentation, the Board agreed on the importance of striking the correct balance of measures in Mendip between mitigation (reducing emissions of greenhouse gases) and adaptation (planning for more extreme weather patterns).</p> <p>Stephen Fowler queried the role of the planning authority in this respect. Cicely Postan agreed that some conflicts of interest might be encountered, for example, the use of wind turbines in conservation areas or photovoltaic cells on listed buildings, etc. However, the fact that Baker Associates are working on both the Climate Change Strategy and the Local Development Framework means that efforts on a broad front can be made to maximise a reduction in overall demand for energy in Mendip and planning development issues can be addressed.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Baker Associates for their presentation and for their expert advice on this issue. He reminded members that if they required clarification or amplification of any aspects of the presentation, or wished to make input, this could be done through Richard Dixon or Jo Milling.</p>	
6	<p>Next Stages of the Local Development Framework Consultation</p> <p>Sharon Jefferies of Baker Associates reported that a consultation exercise on the Core Strategy Preferred Options will commence on 23rd October and last for 6 weeks. Opportunities for input will be available via the Council's website and through open fora such as workshops, etc. She asked for the MSP's views on how it wished to be consulted. The possibilities are for members to be invited to participate in their own dedicated workshop or to attend a more general open stakeholder workshop. After discussion, the Board agreed that they would prefer to join with other key stakeholders.</p> <p>Sharon Jefferies circulated copies of the pre-consultation Vision and Objectives. The Board agreed to review them individually and let Sara Skirton have any feedback prior to Baker Associates' deadline of 6th October. Following the consultation period, Baker Associates will produce a formal submission, the full timetable for which is available on the Mendip District Council's website.</p> <p>Both Michael Hammond and Elaine Pugsley stressed the importance of capturing the views of all key stakeholders in the consultation process, particularly those of young people and the disadvantaged. They both offered their help as well as information on the most appropriate organisations and personnel to contact regarding such consultation.</p>	
7	<p>MDC New Corporate Plan</p> <p>Cllr Ken Maddock gave a PowerPoint presentation on the new MDC Corporate Plan, copies of which had been circulated prior to</p>	

	<p>the meeting. It is very much work-in-progress and he welcomed any comments or feedback from partners prior to its publication in the early part of next year.</p> <p>Initial thoughts from several partners included adding specific emphasis on the Council's role in providing support and assistance to the most vulnerable members of our community. Cllr Maddock thanked the Board for its input and agreed to take forward all points raised.</p> <p>The Chairman noted the MSP's commitment to Mendip and its communities, and expressed its full support to the District Council in its efforts to produce what should be a very comprehensive and commendable document.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>MDC Community Partnerships</p> <p>Stuart Brown gave a verbal update on the work currently being undertaken by the Council in relation to its Community Partnerships. In particular, if the MSP feels it should have links with these bodies, he requested ideas on how best this can be achieved. Paul Richards reported that he regularly attends meetings of both the West Mendip and Central Mendip Community Partnerships. Following the successful efforts in West Mendip of Cllr Bennett in engaging with hitherto hard-to-reach groups, Inspector Richards feels the Community Partnerships provide an excellent vehicle for members of the public to have their views heard and acted upon. The involvement of the MSP in these meetings can only enhance their merit.</p> <p>The value of linking both organisations was fully accepted and, after discussion, it was agreed that the best way to involve the MSP would be for a member to attend Community Partnership meetings and report back to subsequent MSP Board meetings.</p> <p>In the first instance, Zena Pollard agreed to attend the next Central Mendip Partnership, Richard Dixon will attend the East Mendip Community Partnership and Tony Shepherd will attend the West Mendip Community Partnership, all as representatives of the MSP. This will enable them to appraise the MSP Board of their initial impressions. The Board can then consider ongoing arrangements.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Monitoring the Five Priorities Action Plans</p> <p>The Chairman informed the Board that he would take each of the five actions plans individually, enabling the meeting to deal with issues that may arise singly. Representatives from each of the priority groups were present in order to answer queries or provide amplification.</p>	

	<p>a) <u>Affordable Decent Housing For All</u> Phil Miller reported that he had now received clarification from the Ark Consultancy Group on their analysis of shared ownership units in the district. This will be the subject of further discussion.</p> <p>Phil Miller had recently made a presentation to the Council's Corporate Management Team regarding the Council's future capital programme. Stuart Brown confirmed that the Management Team would be looking at both the capital and revenue budgets over the next few months.</p> <p>Elaine Pugsley and Michael Hammond reiterated their offers of support in the establishment of a Children and Young Peoples' Commissioning Body to ensure links are strengthened between the MSP's Priority and consultation in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>b) <u>Strengthening the Voluntary and Community Sector</u> All actions are on target and no issues were raised on this subject.</p> <p>c) <u>Tackling Climate Change Locally</u> All actions are on target and no issues were raised on this subject.</p> <p>d) <u>Regenerating the Mendip Economy</u> It is hoped that Sonia Pike will be able to provide an update on the Town Plan for Glastonbury at the next meeting. Zena Pollard reported that she will be attending a meeting of the Mendip Business Leaders' Group and should have more information on the retail training proposed for market town traders at the next MSP meeting.</p> <p>e) <u>Investing in Children and Young People</u> Mark Holden highlighted several issues for information.</p> <p>Pauline Clarke and Mark Holden reported on the major change in the terms and organisation of Children and Young Peoples' services with increased multi-agency involvement. The Frome locality team now has a manager in place, Shelagh Fleming, whose current project is the creation of a Family & Children's Centre at The Mount in Frome.</p> <p>An initial pre-locality steering group meeting has already been held in Glastonbury with a further meeting due on 6th October. The recruitment process for locality team managers' posts in Street and Glastonbury and Shepton Mallet and Wells will start in June 2007, with the appointees taking up their posts in April 2008. Pauline Clarke confirmed that this built-in delay was due in part to past experience in recruiting sufficiently high quality managers and would also allow examples of good practice to be implemented in future localities. She confirmed that there was no question of locality teams in the Mendip area being regarded as</p>	
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	<p>'poor relations', evidenced by the fact that Frome is one of the first four pilot schemes to be launched across the county.</p> <p><u>Notes of the monitoring group meeting</u> It was noted that the action papers had been reviewed.</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p>MSP Funding Programme 2006/07</p> <p>Sara Skirton reported that a total Second Homes monies 'pot' of £102,938 is available to the MSP for allocation in 2006/07. The Budget and Finance Sub Group (BFSG) had previously proposed that £60,000 of this money be made available for each of the five Priority Sub Groups to bid against. The BFSG met on 21st August to consider all the bids received. In addition to the proposals submitted by the Priority leads, the BFSG received additional requests for funding from partner organisations, a summary of which had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Board endorsed the recommendation from the BFSG to expenditure of £62,118 in accordance with the bids from the five Priority Sub Groups.</p> <p>The Board endorsed the recommendation from the Budget and Finance Sub Group to expenditure of <i>up to</i> a maximum of £29,952.50 to fund the proposals submitted by the Police and the Mendip YMCA. It should be noted that discussions are underway with the Police to determine exactly what sum is sought for the provision of the PCSO service in Glastonbury. Information since the BFSG meeting on 21st August indicates that this amount is likely to be considerably less than £20,442.50. The Board also noted that it may receive a revised application from the Chair of the Mendip Environment Forum later in the financial year in relation to setting up a Community Interest Company.</p> <p>The Board agreed with the recommendation from the BFSG to approve a change in expenditure relating to the 2005/06 allocation to the Regenerating the Mendip Economy priority.</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>GrantFinder Database Programme</p> <p>Sarah Guscott, External Funding and Research Officer, joined the meeting to give a brief demonstration of the GrantFinder database software. She reported that Mendip District Council has purchased a subscription on behalf of the community as a whole as a resource for organisations working within the district. The software can 'signpost' organisations to some 4,000 potential funding sources and is free at the point of use.</p> <p>For partners' information, GrantFinder can be accessed via Mendip District Council's own website www.mendip.gov.uk, using the search facility to find 'external funding'. The page then contains a link which takes organisations through to instructions of how to register on GrantNet which will enable them to have</p>	

	<p>their own access facility under the Council's auspices. Tony Shepherd confirmed that he has already been registered with GrantFinder for several months and during this time has located over 20 potential sources of funding for various groups.</p> <p>Sarah urged partners to disseminate this information as widely as possible through their own organisations in order to maximise registrations with GrantFinder and consequently achieve greater value for money.</p>	
12	<p>Engaging With the Community</p> <p>Sara Skirton provided members with a brief verbal update on progress made with the audit of partners' various activities on engagement exercises with their communities. A database is being built with the responses already received and remaining partners are requested to submit their completed proformas as soon as possible.</p> <p>Mendip District Council is currently capacity building in various areas, one strand of which is engaging with the community. This group is being led by Charles Uzzell, the Council's Business Manager, Planning and Environment. It is the Council's intention to hold a stakeholder event in Spring 2007 to celebrate engagement with our partners and Sara extended an invitation to the MSP partner organisations to join the Council in developing and participating in this event. She will disseminate further information by e-mail and will await partners' responses.</p>	
13	<p>Local Area Agreement Update</p> <p>Sara Skirton introduced Andrew Freeman, Somerset County Council's Community Development Officer who was able to update the Board on the issues surrounding the Local Area Agreement (LAA). He reported that his role is to co-ordinate County Council input locally with the MSP and MDC. Sara Skirton is mapping the MSP Community Strategy with the LAA to identify synergistic areas and Andrew is working closely with her and other partners to ensure that delivery of the objectives contained in the LAA become a reality.</p> <p>Several issues of concern were raised. Elaine Pugsley queried at what level expenditure on and management of social and emotional behavioural support for children would be delivered. Similarly, Richard Dixon was uncertain of the way in which Local Area Agreements can support environmental initiatives.</p> <p>Sara Skirton clarified that Mark Stone, Somerset County Council's lead officer for the LAA has requested her to 'flag up' any apparent gaps and areas of concern. So far, these include climate change and environmental issues. Michelle Hawkes pointed out that the LAA contains a stringent 'stretch' target on increasing physical activity such as walking/cycling, etc, which</p>	

	<p>could provide a loose connection to environmental issues.</p> <p>Andrew Freeman confirmed that concerns will be voiced and addressed when the LAA is refreshed and revisited in 2007.</p>	
14	<p>Shepton 21</p> <p>Zena Pollard brought the Board up-to-date with the activities of Shepton 21 over the preceding months. Following the retirement of Steve Chaudoir, Paul Frampton has temporarily taken over the leadership of the organisation. He has visited four other coastal and market towns in order to look at the models of best practice in action which will help in Shepton 21's future development.</p> <p>On 3rd October, David Thomson is hosting a meeting of the Mendip Business Leaders' Group. Discussion will take place on identification of key people who can act in an advisory capacity to move the political and socio-economic aims of the district forward.</p> <p>Zena was pleased to report that Shepton 21 is now working closely in tandem with Bath & West Management on their development projects. In response to a query from Richard Dixon, she confirmed that transport issues will be a subject for discussion, particularly the long-term possibility of a rail link to the showground.</p> <p>On a more disappointing note, Zena reported that it is unlikely that the development of a Community Advice, Training and Employment Centre located in the old BT Exchange Building in Paul Street will go ahead.</p>	
15	<p>Glastonbury SRB</p> <p>Sonia Pike was not present at the meeting, so an update will be given at the next meeting of the Board on 28 November.</p>	
14	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no other business to be discussed.</p>	
16	<p>Dates for future meetings</p> <p>The date of the last meeting in 2006 was noted: - 28 November Commencing at 3pm in the Council Chamber at Mendip District Council offices.</p>	

The meeting finished at 5.40 pm

Briefing paper for MLSP Meeting of the 28th November 2006

MENDIP CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Background

At a time when there are extensive discussions about how the LAA meets the objectives of the Somerset Strategic Partnership and how the VCS will be funded in the future, the Somerset Advice Bureaux felt it would be useful to produce a briefing paper for the SSP meeting of the 10th November. The paper outlined the contribution the Bureaux already make to meeting some of the LAA objectives and outcomes and how they might contribute in the future.

This corresponding briefing paper details the work of the Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau for the information Mendip Strategic Partnership.

Mendip CAB

- Provides an accessible advice service to everyone in the Mendip District Council area.
- The service is essential, unique and provides holistic advice across the District in a cost effective way
- Attracts over 70 high calibre volunteers who commit to 6 months initial training, plus on-going development training, and who commit to working at least one day per week
- The work is nationally audited, and quality marked by the Legal Service Commission, and includes LSC franchise work in welfare benefits.
- Our work directly addresses **ALL SIX** objectives of the Somerset LAA and impacts significantly on **TEN** of the 16 outcomes. For example:
Children & Young People – Financial Inclusion Fund outreach in Childrens Centres
Healthier Communities – GP Outreach work
Older people – H/V to housebound clients
Economic Development - Inward investment
Safer Communities – Domestic abuse project
Stronger Communities – Volunteering opportunities
Cross Cutting – Preventing house repossessions

For the year 2005/2006 Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau

- saw **7,684 individuals** making over 19,500 client visits
- dealt with 41,763 enquiries

- managed, with the clients, over **£6.5 million** personal debt and its' impact on health.
- brought in over **£1.25 million** to the Somerset economy primarily via benefit take-up and employment settlements
- helped avoid homelessness in at least 147 **families** (each avoidance saves the community >£10,000)
- provided significant high quality advice on Domestic Abuse, in GP Surgeries, in Glastonbury Mini Sure Start and Frome Family Centres, via Home Visits, Employment Tribunals and as an "Alternative Office" for the Pension Service and the Disability Benefits Unit.
- received £180,426 core statutory funding and enhanced this with **£140,858** short term project funding (core statutory funding has been reduced by £25,000 for the current year)
- this enabled the Bureau to run 5 town offices as well as 8 outreaches and a mobile.
- the 70+ volunteers are supported and supervised by 6 FTE staff (management, admin., guidance tutors). Other staff are employed via specific project funding.
- the **Volunteers** contribute at least 25,760 hours of expert time per annum in total (value at £10 per hour = £257, 600)
- worked with over 30 partner agencies to provide a comprehensive service to clients

What Mendip Citizen Advice Bureau seeks:

- Recognition of its' current contribution to the Community
- long term involvement and commitment within the LAA as key partners delivering the Mendip and Somerset Strategic Partnership Objectives
- the opportunity to participate in the strategic planning
- Secure long term core funding
- Further development of our vital role in the VCS

What we offer:

- A free, independent, confidential advice service providing impartial information, guidance and support to all individuals, making responsible use of the experience so gained.
- Volunteering opportunities, training and life long learning to a quality assured standard
- Employment opportunities and entry/reentry to the job market
- A means of interfacing the community with e-government.

For further information on the work of the Mendip Citizens Advice Bureau or to discuss the contents of this paper please contact Sonia J Pike, Bureau Manager: Tel.no. 01749 345394



The Community Development Team at Somerset County Council

The Community Development team at Somerset County Council comprises a small team of staff that have recently been brought together under my leadership. The team is a part of the Partnerships and Community Development service within the Community Directorate.

My name is Gareth O'Rourke and my job title is Group Manager – Community Development. My contact details are:

Gareth O'Rourke
Group Manager – Community Development
GORourke@somerset.gov.uk
01823 358068

The main aim of the team is to work with key local partners, such as District Councils, Parish Councils, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and the voluntary sector, within specific geographical areas, to coordinate the input of Somerset County Council. Our activities will have a particular emphasis on achieving the outcomes set out within the Local Area Agreement.

This involves providing a number of separate but closely related functions including:

- Serving as primary point of contact between District and Parish / Town Councils and the County Council (where there is not already an established contact for the business matter concerned), in a way that enhances two-way communication and facilitates partnership working.
- Working with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations to assist them in building infrastructure and increasing their capacity to play a greater role in the delivery of public services.
- Developing Somerset County Council's approach to promoting well-being in local communities by helping to improve access to our own services and those of our partners at neighbourhood level.

We are currently involved in a number of key projects. These include: development (and now implementation) of the Compact with the VCS; overseeing service level agreements with Councils for Voluntary Service / Citizens Advice Bureaux etc, as well as the DEFRA funded Rural Social and Community Programme; leading the implementation of the DH funded Partnerships for Older People programme; and taking the lead role in strategic development of support for Carers in Somerset.

The Community Development team is based at County Hall and has six Community Development Officers (CDOs), each of whom links to a specific LSP. In order to properly fulfil this function it is anticipated that the CDOs will be based for a significant part of their working week within the District Council offices of the LSP area they are assigned to. In addition to their specific LSP area responsibilities, each CDO will have a responsibility for a particular cross-cutting theme or project across the whole of Somerset.

The CDOs and their geographical / theme responsibilities are:

Taunton Deane Area

Sue Sheppard

LSP responsibility: Taunton Deane Partnership
Theme responsibility: Implementation of Partnership for Older People programme.
In post from: 1st July 2006
SMSheppard@somerset.gov.uk 01823 356711

Sedgemoor Area

Jane Robinson

LSP responsibility: Sedgemoor in Somerset LSP
Theme responsibility: Volunteering development and use of village halls.
In post from: 1st July 2006
JSRobinson@somerset.gov.uk 01823 355473

Mendip Area

Andrew Freeman

LSP responsibility: Mendip LSP
Theme responsibility: Strategic development of services of for carers.
In post from: 29th August 2006
Afreeman@somerset.gov.uk 01823 357996

South Somerset Area

Alison Templeton

LSP responsibility: South Somerset Together Partnership
Theme responsibility: Worklessness.
In post from: 25th September 2006
ATempleton@somerset.gov.uk 01823 357997

West Somerset Area

Vacancy

LSP responsibility: West Somerset LSP
Theme responsibility:
In post from:
Contact: SMSheppard@somerset.gov.uk 01823 356711

Emily Gilbert

Theme responsibility: Compact implementation. SLAs with voluntary organisations. Somerset Partnership Fund.
In post from: 1st April 2006
EGilbert@somerset.gov.uk 01823 355401

Summary of the Key Elements of Somerset County Council's 'Localisation and Frontline Councillors' Paper.

Over all Summary

The paper is a 'first step' to delivering localised structures and working arrangements for the Council. It provides a platform for the devolution of budgets and service decisions to front line councillors, as well as to key local partners such as Parish and Town Councils. In addition, it will provide specific funding to support enhanced Local Area Agreement (LAA) delivery identified through direct engagement with Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). The longer term outcome will be to ensure that communities across Somerset are able to directly influence, prioritise and design the services and policies that affect the services that are delivered locally.

Key Points from the Recommendations

- The council will create five area working panels as previously identified within its annual plan for 2006/07. These will match the existing District Council and LSP boundaries.
- Between now and Spring 2007 these panels, made up of all County Councillors within the area, will work with key local partners to determine the future structure of the Council at community level. Examples of key local partners include District Councils, Parish Councils, the Police and Voluntary and Community Sector groups.
- The community level arrangements are likely to vary from area to area and will be locally defined. Where there is wide spread partner support for the County Council to use structures that already exist, such as existing District Council area working arrangements or area boards, the County will seek to do so, if at all possible.
- Where Parish Plans or local Community Strategies have identified approaches or priorities that will add value to existing targets within the LAA, additional funding will be made available to secure these outcomes. In the future, funding will be weighted to recognised rurality issues. However, initially it will be calculated at an amount equivalent to £15,000 for each County Councillor, and made available to the area panels
- This money can only be accessed when:-
 - The LSP and Area Working Panel have jointly agreed, with local partners such as Parish Councils, an appropriate level of increased local performance via a "mini-LAA".
 - Community or Parish level agreements have been reached that specify the role of partners and agencies in delivery of this increased performance.

- Clear mechanisms and measures for determining success have been identified.
- In order to support the role of Parish and Town Councils, and encourage the production and use of Parish Plans, the County will seek to agree a structured agreement with each Parish and Town Council to identify:-
 - How the County will work with partners to support the development of Parish or Town Plans and support the Quality Parish scheme
 - How the County Council will use Parish Plans at a strategic level and contribute towards their delivery at the local level
 - How the County Council and Parish or Town Councils will engage in consultation and policy development
 - Identify any agreed functions that the Parish or Town Council have agreed to undertake on behalf of the County Council or local members
 - Identify a primary County Council point of contact for each Parish or Town Council within a geographical area.
- To take forward the development of the partnership databank so that all partners are able, if they wish, to access a common set of performance and statistical information on public sector delivery across the County.
- The Chief Executive will develop a revised officer structure that will ensure the Council's structure and services are integrated at the area level and that local partners have a single senior management contact. The revised structure will ensure a strong strategic centre with the ability to represent the "place" of Somerset, but will recognise that delivery and budgetary decisions will be primarily taken at the local level via the local arrangements outlined within the paper
- Once appropriate community level structures are deployed, the area working panels will further consult local partners on what on-going structures the County will require at the LSP wide level – recognising that Government guidance indicates that many county council services benefit from a layer of co-ordination at the LSP level.

The Future

Once in place, the County Council will seek to delegate and devolve as much of it's funding and decision making as possible to the area and community level. This will include the power to influence and direct policy, define service delivery priorities, structures and spending. This will further strengthen the power and influence of local communities and the front line councillors who serve them.

Localisation and Frontline Councillors

Executive Portfolio Holder: Cathy Bakewell
Division and Local Member: All
Lead Officer: Alan Jones
Author: Alan Jones and Mark Stone
Contact Details: mgstone@somerset.gov.uk

1. Summary/link to the Corporate Plan

- 1.1 The Council is committed to building area working, at a community level, from the bottom up. This is to ensure that the unique needs and aspirations of local communities and neighbourhoods, reflected through the knowledge and commitment of County Councillors to their local areas, can be fully met. Area structures at the level of communities and neighbourhoods can only be successfully created through meaningful local consultation and engagement. This paper is the beginning of a process that will result in the council devolving significant decision making and funding to local delivery structures, developed jointly with the communities and partners they serve.
- 1.2 Considerable work across the Council is already undertaken at a local or area level and the Corporate Plan (Aim 4) specifically commits the council to creating five area committees. To further empower frontline councillors to fully use their knowledge of local communities they need to not only control the local allocation of resources, but the local design and delivery of services as well. Only by this approach can we ensure that local outcomes fully reflect the priorities of local communities.
- 1.3 To be successful, area working arrangements must enable frontline councillors to perform two key tasks. The first is to maximise the impact and power of local communities and neighbourhoods on strategic direction – the leadership of place – and the second is to ensure that local services are delivered in a cost effective way that meets local expectations and priorities. The recommendations in this paper are intended to create the opportunity for local councillors, working with local communities and partners, to design the local area structures that best meet their unique needs, whilst providing increased ability for local communities to influence and determine the wider strategic objectives of the County Council.
- 1.4 To support the wider deployment of area working, this paper also provides a resume of key elements of the national governments thinking on localisation and community leadership since 2004. Drawing on this, it highlights three key elements necessary for effective community leadership to be achieved. These are:-
 - a) The ability for councillors to lead and directly influence local debate, local delivery and local prioritisation of services at both the community and the area level.
 - b) The ability for councillors to engage with their communities and represent these views to partners, creating a strategic vision for their area that fully meets local aspirations and needs.

c) That the County is able to build an overarching strategic vision and framework that is of sufficient critical mass and clarity to enable the place of Somerset to influence regional and national policy development and funding allocations.

- 1.5 This paper does not suggest, or consider, any revised officer or scrutiny arrangements that will be necessary to support increased localisation. However, to maximise local leadership and achieve value for money in the delivery of local services, form must surely follow function. It seems inevitable therefore that the increased localisation of political leadership will require significant changes in structure and role for the council's officers and scrutiny function.
- 1.6 Once appropriate structures have been established at the LSP and local area working level, the council will devolve significant additional budgets to these structures by devolving to the area arrangements much of the funding and decision making currently held within Directorate budgets and structures. Not only will this increase local decision-making and accountability, it will also reduce, or remove, the need for many of our current central structures and procedures. By ensuring our area working arrangements are cross-cutting in nature, rather than service directorate based, we will achieve a significant reduction in the over all level of bureaucracy experienced by local communities and citizens when engaging with the public sector.
- 1.7 The role of members is the crucial underpinning element of all that a Local Authority undertakes. Therefore, all areas of the Corporate Plan are relevant to this paper, specifically Aim Four, the creation of five areas committees.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Council is asked to consider the following recommendations:-
- 2.2 That the Council confirms its commitment to building, from the bottom up, area working arrangements that support frontline councillors in direct delivery of the priorities and objectives of the communities they serve.
- 2.3 The creation of Area Working Panels, based on current district Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) boundaries, bringing together all County Councillors within the area, as outlined in paragraphs 3.9.3 and 3.9.4 to oversee the development of local area working mechanisms within each LSP area.
- 2.4 That each Area Working Panel, by consulting and working with local partners, identifies appropriate community or neighbourhood level 'area' engagement and decision-making structures by Spring 2007.

The principle used to define the community or neighbourhood level area structures will be that of promoting the empowerment of communities and individuals, rather than one of single service based geographical solutions. Arrangements within each of the five LSP areas will need to meet common principles of function and consistency, but at the local level should be designed to support outcomes, rather than uniformity of structure. The structural, financial and other implications of these locally defined proposals will form the basis of a further paper for Council in Spring 2007.

- 2.5 That, linking with the Parish planning process, the five Area Working Panels are allocated an additional financial resource, in the first instance, of £15,000 per member. This funding is to be available only when the following four conditions are met:-
- a) The Area Working Panel and the LSP for that area have agreed, with the relevant local partners, a mini-Local Area Agreement. This should identify local delivery

arrangements that will 'stretch' local performance, against local priorities and Parish plans, beyond the requirements of the current Local Area Agreement.

b) That the local partners, and local communities, involved in achieving these local stretch targets agree a transparent 'Community Contract' to deliver these. This will need to specify the funding being provided by each partner to achieve the outcomes and the roles and responsibilities of all partners in delivery. This agreement should clearly identify the baseline position and agreed outcome measures.

c) The local Area Working Panel, with local partners and communities, are able to identify appropriate mechanisms to sustain and embed this improved performance, or outcome, at the area level.

d) The outcomes achieved are in line with the Somerset Strategic Partnership Sustainable Communities Strategy.

2.6 Once full Council has considered the local 'area' recommendations in Spring 2007, the role and function of the Area Working Panels will be reviewed to identify whether they remain the most appropriate future structure for on-going County Council engagement at the district LSP level and deliver the commitment in the Corporate Plan to create five area committees.

2.7 That to support the development of local area working, a structured agreement is negotiated with each Parish or Town Council. This will agree the way that local area working arrangements will support the development of Parish Plans, the use of Parish Plans, undertake consultation with Parishes and, where relevant, detail any delegated responsibility that Parishes will be able to exercise through engagement with their local County Councillor(s) or local working arrangements.

2.8 That the development of the multi-agency 'databank' envisioned within the Somerset Local Area Agreement is taken forward. This will ensure that all partners are able to access a single point of information for strategic planning and performance monitoring. This data will be made available at County, LSP, area and super output area levels. Please see Annex C.

2.9 That the Chief Executive is requested to develop proposals for revised officer structures, that will support cross cutting area working and offer partners within a defined area a single senior management contact. These proposals should include the development of a smaller, more strategic, corporate centre and a senior officer structure with enhanced policy development capacity to reflect the reality of the devolution of funding and decision making to cross cutting area working structures. They will also need to ensure the delivery of enhanced member support services. These proposals should be presented to Council no later than Summer 2007.

2.10 That it is noted that the White Paper on the future role of Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Government (which will be published after the writing of this paper) and the forthcoming Lyons Review of the funding and function of local government may impact on these recommendations. Should this be the case, further reports will be brought to council regarding this matter.

3. **Background**

3.1 The search for mechanisms that empower local communities and support the voice of their elected representatives is as old as democracy itself. The creation of devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales has been followed by the increased focus on regional bodies, such as Regional Development Agencies, in England. The South West Centre of Excellence recently identified that there were over one hundred regional bodies

within the South West.

3.2 Along side the development of regional bodies there have been a considerable number of Government papers on increasing the influence of 'frontline' councillors and empowering community action. It is these documents that are most relevant to area working at the local level. They are summarised in the following section of this report. Where the thinking or questions raised within the report have subsequently been clarified or withdrawn, they are not highlighted, but can be seen in the full papers, which are available from the report authors.

3.3 **Local:vision**

3.3.1 Published by the Office of the Deputy Prime in July 2004, under the heading "The future of local government: Developing a 10 year vision". The report identified four key areas as essential to achieving 'sustainable communities'.

Leadership. The paper identified the underpinning theme of leadership at two levels; the community leadership role and the role of robust democratic and managerial leaders within the council itself. Strong political leadership and strong managerial leadership are identified as being intrinsically linked in high performing authorities.

Community leadership is identified as the ability of councillors to demonstrate their accountability in two ways. Firstly, by bringing local partners together to deliver integrated local services for communities. Secondly by building the capacity *within* communities to lead themselves and foster greater engagement in local decision making. The report argues this requires councillors to champion the priorities of their area and ensure local delivery is shaped so that services are delivered through cross-cutting partnerships rather than organisational convenience or history.

Citizen Engagement. To ensure participation and deliver locally cohesive communities citizens need to see that they can control and influence the delivery of the local services that support them. Arrangements that provide an enhanced role for non-executive councillors, at an area level, exercising direct control on priorities, structure and delivery were identified as key elements to provide a stronger voice for local communities. The report acknowledges that to avoid fracturing communities along lines of special interest a wider cohesion strategy is necessary.

Service Delivery. There are some services that most citizens believe should have equality of delivery, for example, the perceived 'post code lottery' within the NHS. Yet for others, particularly environmental issues, community safety and community cohesion services, there is evidence that local residents welcome a far greater ability to identify local priorities and standards. The report challenges Local Authorities to develop arrangements that empower local communities whilst, at the strategic level, maximise sub-regional or regional partnership working to cap costs.

A New Structural Settlement For Government. Specific reference is made to the fact that "The organisational structure for the delivery of many local functions and services has the appearance of historical accident rather than design". Recognising that a more coherent approach does not mean blanket uniformity, the key challenge is identified as providing local control of service design and

outcome, whilst retaining sufficient corporate and political capacity to maximise value for money and plan services strategically across wider areas.

3.4 Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter

- 3.4.1 Published in January 2005, this report expanded on the devolution and empowerment of local areas outlined within Local:vision.
- 3.4.2 This paper places vital importance on mapping a council's area working arrangements to Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP). It cites evidence that local level engagement has been more successful where it operates within a wider strategic framework set jointly by the Council and LSP.
- 3.4.3 Arguing that LSPs provide a critical mass for local strategy that supports the principles of efficiency and proportionality it says "unduly extensive devolution to the most local level is unlikely to be effective or efficient". The key lessons learned from this review of decentralisation of decision making are shown as Appendix A to this report.
- 3.4.4 The report considers the nature of councillors' roles, highlighting the need to ensure that devolution and delegation to frontline councillors is accompanied by changes to officer and scrutiny structures to deliver appropriate support and challenge for decision-making at an area level. Below area level, it argues that frontline councillors, on the basis of need or issue, should bring structures and communities of interest together. Under this approach, sub-area structures will be fluid and may vary from issue to issue, or time to time.
- 3.4.5 On engagement with Parish councils, the report identifies several characteristics of good practice, primarily arguing strongly for formalised agreements with Parish and Town Councils. These would define the mechanisms used to secure their input into the prioritisation and delivery structures for services in their localities, as well as at the strategic countywide level. This resonates strongly with the feedback received by the County Council in its own consultation events with Parishes.
- 3.4.6 The report suggests that the empowerment of frontline councillors, in the ways described above, does not sit easily alongside executive portfolio holders, unless schemes of delegation and accountability are specifically reviewed. Successful locality delivery is identified as working across traditional services and organisational boundaries, rather than within executive portfolios or themes.

3.5 Vibrant Local Leadership

- 3.5.1 Also published in January 2005, this report provides support and guidance on the delivery of enhanced community leadership and identifies the unique strength of local authorities as strategic leadership of place. Identifying the key role of local councils as bringing together partners and stakeholders and working with them to create solutions that meet the needs and aspirations of local people. Again the concept of political and managerial leadership being required at two different extremes is raised. The first level being delivery of strategic vision and economy

of scale across the council's administrative area and beyond. The other being at the local or community level. The paper argues that formal structures and mechanisms of coordination are needed between these extremes to maximise economy and efficiency and provide clear lines of democratic accountability within a strategic framework.

- 3.5.2 Identifying "the main vehicle for addressing cross-cutting issues at a local level is the (district) Local Strategic Partnership", the report sees the challenge for frontline councillors as being three fold. Firstly using the Local Area Agreement to ensure local priorities are delivered as part of a wider strategy. Secondly, overseeing the totality of public expenditure within the local area, ensuring it is deployed to meet the needs and aspirations of local communities and thirdly, to deliver the structural and transformation change needed to integrate all public sector delivery at the local level.
- 3.5.3 The future role of Councils is also touched on. Beyond leadership of place, it is seen as utilising the LAA to agree with Government local priorities and performance targets; to integrate horizontally between services and partners; and, to offer greater accountability to the public through local scrutiny and decision-making.
- 3.5.4 On the role of frontline councillors, it argues they should have the specific role of representing and advocating for the Divisions they are elected to represent. Enhancing the role of local councillors within area arrangements are seen as essential to this, as well providing a platform for changes to financial decision making. Highlighting that such arrangements should support the executive body, rather than work against it or create duplication, it argues that where budgetary accountability is devolved, scrutiny arrangements must follow. It also argues that to empower councillors to act locally, councils will need to change their officer structures to ensure that resources can be deployed across the organisation and partners, rather than from within services.

3.6 All Our Futures

- 3.6.1 Written by the Tavistock Institute, this document considers whether, in relation to structural change, the principle of devolution is preferable to decentralisation. Devolution is seen as the localisation of priorities, policies and outcomes where decentralisation is seen as the localisation of national policies and targets.
- 3.6.2 The report argues that to revitalise local engagement with the political process and outcomes, devolution is the logical way forward. It also provides a description of the central strategic role that local government will need to provide:-
 - a) Provide clear, cross cutting leadership of place
 - b) Balance competing demands between the needs and demands of different groups and communities
 - c) Securing area wide, and regional, support for the behavioural and lifestyle changes that issues such as climate change require.

d) Deliver a localisation agenda that will require increased collaboration between organisations and “the continued demolition of departmental and organisational silos”.

3.7 Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future

3.7.1 Published on the 8th December 2005, this consultation document builds on the concepts introduced by *Vibrant Local Leadership*. It specifically identifies Local Strategic Partnerships as the vehicle through which councils could, and should, demonstrate and exercise their community leadership role.

3.7.2 The paper focuses on how LSPs can be supported to move from an advisory role to one of local co-ordination and delivery. Drawing on experience in Scotland, the consultation proposes placing a duty on various providers of public services to co-operate with the local authority in developing integrated delivery solutions tailored to the needs of local communities, highlighting the need for such approaches to operate within a consistent ‘place’ wide strategic framework.

3.7.3 The LSP is seen as the “partnership of partnerships” at a local level. Linked to this is the suggestion that all local thematic arrangements, such as CDRPs, LAA delivery teams, and integrated Children’s and Young People services, will become accountable to the LSP for delivery. LSP, in conjunction with local councillors, are seen as the vehicle to co-ordinate the local engagement and involvement of the private and voluntary sectors with the activities of the statutory sector.

3.7.4 The consultation establishes, for the first time, the concept that in two tier areas the ‘strategic’ view of place should rest with the countywide strategic partnership and local delivery design and outcome achievement resting with district level LSPs. Although a consultation, subsequent government policy in relation to the Local Area Agreement and CDRP funding have taken a similar view to this.

3.8 The Local Area Agreement

3.8.1 Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are seen by many as the beginning of the devolution of target setting, within a national policy context, to local areas. In two tier areas, the lead authority for the LAA is the County and the lead partnership the countywide strategic partnership. There are strong indications from Government that, over time, increased funding will be channelled via the LAA to ensure it is applied to locally agreed priorities.

3.8.2 The LAA is an example of the leadership of place, expressed in terms of over arching strategy, resting at the county level and delivery and local community engagement resting with district level LSPs. Within Somerset, partners have been able to negotiate a governance arrangement for this relationship that is widely recognised as an example of national best practice. A summary of this governance process, which applies to the entire activities of the Somerset Strategic Partnership (SSP), is contained as Annex B to this report.

3.8.3 The LAA process identified the crucial nature of data, at a community level, to address inequality, target resource and monitor progress. Whilst still ‘work in

progress' the SSP has agreed to the County Council hosting a databank of information from all partners. This 'Databank' will enable all partners to utilise the same data for strategic planning and support greater localisation and targeting of resources. In line with the recommendations of the Office of National Statistics, the LAA also commits all partners to move towards the provision of data at 'Super Output Area' level. Super Output Areas are units of commonly defined population that, for statistical and planning purposes, are directly comparable. Annex C contains an explanation of Super Output Areas and a pictorial breakdown of these across the County.

3.9 Proposals for Area Working Panels and Frontline Councillors in Somerset

- 3.9.1 Members and officers of the authority already undertake considerable community engagement. Members currently have a discretionary sum of £5,000 per annum to utilise specifically on community projects of their choice. Many of our services are already delivered locally some, such as Social Care, are literally delivered in the homes and bedrooms of Somerset's citizens. Localisation and empowerment of frontline councillors within a more defined structure is not a new concept for the County, but a logical development of the direction of travel we have undertaken.
- 3.9.2 In order to lead their communities and to advocate for them, members undertake considerable public engagement on a daily basis. Evidence shows that the visibility of members, and the engagement of communities with them, can be increased through the delegation of budget responsibility and the provision of clearly defined forums for activity. Communities need to know who to engage with, and that their engagement can affect decisions. For this reason, throughout this report, reference is made to 'frontline councillors', the elected of the council who will be at the forefront of the localisation and community engagement agenda.
- 3.9.3 The adoption of the term 'frontline councillor' clearly outlines the expectation of the Council that all members are able to act as champion and primary engagement point for the communities they represent. Via the Organisational Development Group, work is progressing to update the 'members charter', which will include reference to 'frontline' councillors. In order to better support and equip all members in undertaking their role as community champions, it will be necessary for member development training and support to be enhanced beyond the level that is currently available.
- 3.9.4 Reflecting on the papers outlined above, the view of Sir Michael Lyons of the council as the 'convenor' of services' and our experience of the LAA, it seems inevitable that the role of LSPs will continue to increase. They will become the local partnership engagement hubs, identifiers of local priorities and co-ordinators of delivery across partners at the wider area level. This role, which is complimentary to the role of frontline councillors, provides a geographical platform for the deployment of council Area Working Panels. By being coterminous with the district LSPs they provide a convergence of governance and partnership delivery structures that will enable Area Working Panels to make an immediate

impact, adding considerable value to existing community engagement rather than duplication of effort.

3.9.5 Under this proposal, the Council will create five separate Area Working Panels, one for each of the district LSP areas. Whilst further work will be necessary to develop the constitutional arrangements, scheme of delegation and scrutiny proposals that will support the Area Working Panels, it is possible to outline principles that will be common to them all:-

a) That they will include all County Councillors from within the individual LSP area, as full voting members of the Area Working Panel

b) That elected members from the coterminous District Council area will be invited to sit on the Area Working Panels, initially as non-voting members

c) That the coterminous LSP chair will be invited to sit on the Area Working Panel, initially as a non-voting member

d) That the Area Working Panel will elect a chair from within their own membership

e) That the Area Working Panel will develop, jointly with the Parish Councils within the area, proposals for ensuring representation and engagement with Parish Councils via membership of the Area Working Panel and local area working arrangements.

f) That each Area Working Panel will be required to propose, to full council, appropriate community or neighbourhood level 'area' engagement mechanisms and delivery structures in Spring 2007.

g) That meetings will be publicised and held in line with County Council procedures and the minutes and decisions publicised accordingly

h) That meetings will operate in full accordance with the council's policies in relation to probity, equalities and declaration of interest.

3.9.6 Assuming the recommendations from the five Area Working Panels are adopted, then the County Council will need to consider whether the Area Working Panels are the appropriate vehicle, in the longer term, for the County Council to engage with debate and decision making at the LSP wide level and deliver the commitment within the Corporate Plan to create five area committees.

3.9.7 Both the Quality Parish Scheme and the Rural Pathfinder programmes recognise the key role of Parish Councils in active community engagement and the value of Parish plans in determining local priorities for action. Across the county there is already considerable engagement with Parishes. Parish plans exist in many areas; however there is a need for greater clarity in our interaction with Parish Councils and greater consistency across the County.

3.9.8 In order to ensure a degree of consistency and transparency at the County level, it is proposed that a formal agreement is created between the County and Parish

Councils on a Countywide basis. Specifically, this should agree minimum standards for:-

- a) The way that Area Working Panels will undertake consultation with Parishes
- b) The way officers within the Community Development Team will work with the Community Council and Parishes to support the development of Parish Plans
- c) The way that Area Working Panels and the County Council will use and consider Parish Plans within both its local area arrangements and County wide strategy development
- d) Where relevant, this agreement should also detail any delegated responsibility, either financial or policy based, that Parishes will be able to exercise through engagement with their local County Councillor(s) or Area Working Panels.

3.9.9 Somerset is home to a wide range of diverse communities in both a rural and urban settings. The diversity of our communities is one of Somerset's strengths but it does mean that a 'one size fits all arrangement' for sub LSP area community engagement is unlikely to be successful. To address this, as outlined in 3.9.5 above, it will be necessary for each Area Working Panel to consider and bring forward proposals that identify appropriate arrangements for local area engagement and decision making in Spring 2007.

3.9.10 These proposals will be locally determined reflecting local circumstance and local partnership arrangements. Even with these in place, it will be necessary for the Area Working Panel to agree, or identify, other options for local area engagement, depending on the issue or subject they are considering. The need for such 'task and finish' approaches, that combine councillors from different divisions and work across wider geographical areas, such as an LSP and the Government White Paper on the future of LSPs, suggest the need for the Council to develop on-going engagement and decision making mechanisms at the LSP level.

3.9.11 Building on our experience of the LAA, there is strong evidence that when partners are mutually agreed on the need to undertake action to achieve specific outcomes, organisational divisions present less of a barrier to integrated delivery. Whilst initially appearing bureaucratic, the LAA process has allowed disparate partners to commonly identify shared outcomes and to align, or pool, their efforts and funding to achieve them. This has been undertaken against the backdrop of a common strategic objective – the delivery of the Somerset Community Strategy.

3.9.12 In order to continue to build on the early success of the Somerset LAA, it is proposed that each area working panel, working with partners, will develop and publish a mini-LAA for their area. Taking the targets or commitments within the LAA as their baseline (or current area performance if this is higher), these mini-LAAs should identify the key areas where the Area Working Panel, and its local partners, are able to work together to exceed the level of performance that would otherwise be the case. In effect, the countywide LAA will become the new minimum standard across the County. The area-based mini-LAAs will identify the local priorities and performance 'stretch' that partners will achieve, specifically for local communities and citizens, beyond this minimum standard. It will also need

to identify, via a 'Community Contract' the additional funding provided by each partner and the role of each partner and local community in the delivery of the enhanced outcome.

3.9.13 By adopting the approach of Area Working Panels developing mini-LAAs, the delivery of the additional 'stretched' performance within them will mean that local communities will see a clear and visible commitment to meeting their priorities and be able to be actively involved in their achievement. To provide additional funding to support this process, it is proposed that the Area Working Panels will receive an additional discretionary sum, initially equivalent to £15,000 per member, which can only be used when the criteria used to develop the current Somerset LAA are met and a mini-LAA is in place that reflects priorities identified within the Somerset Community Strategy.

4. **Consultations undertaken**

4.1 Please see background papers.

5. **Implications**

5.1 These proposals will require further changes to the council's scheme of delegation.

5.2 Given the requirements placed on local authorities to undertake full scrutiny of delivery and decision-making, at the appropriate level, these proposals will require amendment to the current scrutiny processes. Over time, as more responsibility is devolved to Area arrangements, it is unlikely our current centrally based scrutiny model will be able to fulfil the role required of it and we may need to consider a move to undertake scrutiny of policy centrally, and scrutiny of delivery at the level of the Area Working Panels.

5.3 The funding required to support the approaches within this paper will come from within currently agreed budgetary limits. The total cost will be initially be in the order of £1million per annum, the majority of which is accounted for by the allocation of additional funding to the Area Working Panels. This funding will be available to these panels to directly support the delivery of local priorities and local outcomes.

5.4 Democratic Services will incur some additional costs in supporting the Area Working Panels and the introduction of local area working will incur additional costs in member development and IT support. The extent to which this increase is offset by a reduction in central costs will depend on the final structures for local area working. Additionally, whilst we have recently improved our interaction with LSPs and Parish councils via our Community Development team, the proposals within this report will require limited additional funding for this team to ensure that we maximise support for the development and use of Parish plans and are able to sustain the locally customised interaction envisioned within this paper.

6. **Background papers**

6.1 'Local:vision. The future of local government: Developing a 10 year vision'. Published by the ODPM in July 2004.

'Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter'. Published by the ODPM in January 2005

'Vibrant Local Leadership'. Published by the ODPM in January 2005.

'All Our Futures: The challenges for local governance in 2015'. Published by the ODPM in April 2006.

'Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future'. Published by the ODPM in December 2005.

"Rural Pathfinder – Modernising Rural Delivery" – Shropshire County Council

"The SSP and LAA Governance Chart", agreed at the SSP of 14th July 2006.

"The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme". Published by the ODPM in June 2003.

Notes of the SCC Parish Council Consultation events of 2006.

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author

Appendix A – The Lessons Learnt from Past Localisation Initiatives

The Lessons learnt from past initiatives pursued by some councils on devolved decision making and decentralisation:

- ❖ A high number of access points can potentially be costly and staffing costs can be high;
- ❖ Remoteness from the centre can lead to a lack of specialist advice being available;
- ❖ To ensure reliability (of service) and cover for staff in smaller units, it may be necessary to have broader generic skills and lose specialisms;
- ❖ Reinventing the wheel (can occur) and loss of economies of scale
- ❖ Inexperience staff may have a high level of authority without the expertise necessary for decision making;
- ❖ Services can become to demand lead and fragmented, neglecting the need for strategic planning, time and reflection on some issues and services;
- ❖ Relations between different services or different neighbourhoods can lead to rivalries with some areas losing out;
- ❖ Budgeting issues – there are issues around how budgets are allocated and the funding of services across area boundaries;
- ❖ Legislation needs to be complied with – for example, there were difficulties in complying with discrimination legislation; and
- ❖ Accountability can be difficult to monitor or enforce.

From, Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter, ODPM, 2005.

The Mendip Strategic Partnership

Agenda Item: 8

FROM: Sara Skirton, MDC and Ron Ballantine, Chair of MSP Date: 28 November 2006

SUBJECT: **MSP Future Developments**

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This paper asks the Board members to consider how the MSP can build on its successes to date in partnership working. In line with our roles of developing a vision for the Mendip community, delivering on the Local Area Agreement, and being a strong partnership of (thematic) partnerships, opportunities exist for:

- linking in with Mendip District Council's new corporate direction
- being the focus for priority and delivery in Mendip of the Local Area Agreement for Somerset, and
- responding to the proposals in the recently published Local Government White Paper – 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The MSP has been in existence since July 2002. Its achievements to date include:

- Comprehensive baseline information gathering about the Mendip district
- Qualitative public consultation programme - Great Cake of Life Challenge 2003
- Analysis of where the priority 'gaps' are – 11 themes indicated
- Identification of five short term priorities for initial action
- Setting up or identifying sub-groups to take forward the priorities
- Development of action plans to delivery the priorities
- Development of performance monitoring arrangements
- Publication of a 'Community Strategy for Mendip'
- Active and contributing membership of Somerset Strategic Partnership
- Working involvement in preparation of Somerset Local Area Agreement

2.2 The MSP is currently part way through the delivery of the five priority action plans.

3. LINKS WITH MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

3.1 The MSP and Mendip District Council are closely linked, not only in terms of officer support but also because the Council is the lead agency on two of the MSP's priorities.

3.2 MDC is currently consulting on four new priority areas which will form the basis of a long term Corporate Plan:

- Enhancing Mendip as a place to live
- Enabling an environment where individuals and businesses can prosper
- Encouraging and supporting communities and individuals to improve the quality of their life
- Ensuring value for money is provided in all services

3.3 The Council has also just reconfigured its Area Boards, changing them into more participative Area Community Partnerships.

3.4 There are opportunities for these Community Partnerships to forge links with the MSP and for the MSP and MDC to work more collaboratively to deliver their respective priorities, and those of the LAA, where there is mutual benefit in doing so.

3.5 The Local Development Framework (LDF), which replaces the District Local Plan, is a series of planning documents to guide change in Mendip over the next 20 years. The LDF, prepared by the Council, is the tool for the delivery of the spatial elements of the Community Strategy. Because of this, MDC has worked hard to ensure that the LDF and the MSP's Community Strategy are complementary.

3.6 The Council has been involved in a capacity building programme which includes focus on Engaging with the Community and Effective Partnerships. This is highly relevant to the MSP and MSP partners will be invited to become involved in a community engagement /showcase event that the Council is planning for early 2007.

3.7 All Councils were required to undertake a quantitative survey in autumn 2006 known as the BVPI General Survey. One of the blocks of questions in this survey asks respondents to select from a list of items the three they consider most need addressing in the local area. The data should be available by the end of 2006. As well as using this information in the development of its Corporate Plan, MDC will share this data with the MSP.

4. THE WIDER AGENDA

4.1 Although the MSP's prime interest is the wellbeing of the Mendip district, it must also remain tuned into the opportunities and impacts created by sub regional, regional and national initiatives. These include the Lyons Review of local government funding, the consultation on the future role of LSPs, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Somerset, and the forthcoming Local Government White Paper. The latter two have immediate significance for the MSP:

5. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA)

5.1 Somerset has agreed with GOSW a three year LAA. The exact role of the five district LSPs in the delivery of the LAA is currently the subject of discussions but there is no doubt that the district LSPs will need to readjust and realign some of their activity and possibly some of their objectives. A key challenge will be how to resolve potential conflicts for district LSPs between their role as the local 'partnership of partnerships', setting the agenda for an area, and their role as conduits for delivery of the LAA. One

way of addressing this is for the LSP to ensure the districts' priorities influence future LAA development, for example ensuring inclusion of environmental targets.

5.2 Somerset County Council (SCC) is proposing new area working / localisation arrangements to ensure that the LAA is delivered on the ground.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER – STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

6.1 The Local Government White Paper, initially expected in June 2006, was published on 26 October 2006. The full documents, plus a summary version, are available from <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503999>.

(An MDC officer summary of the White Paper is attached as Appendix A.)

6.2 The White Paper contains proposals on *'local leadership; neighbourhoods and empowering users; and a new performance framework, whilst also drawing on the 'New Deal for Cities' agenda and local government efficiency'*. The emphasis is very much on reshaping public services around the people who use them and in many cases delivering in partnership.

6.3 It was initially thought that the White Paper might include a requirement for local government reorganisation in the remaining three tier areas. Whilst the White Paper does not specifically require local government reorganisation in the remaining shire areas, it does include an invitation to 'two tier' areas to submit proposals for either unitary status or for piloting new two tier working arrangements by 25 January 2007. The White Paper also makes it clear that 'two tier' areas will need to work as effectively (in cost and service terms) as unitaries.

6.4 District Councils retain the duty to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) through their LSPs. SCSs are to reflect the LDF and the LAA and vice versa, plus housing strategies where appropriate. County Councils and LSPs must demonstrate they have taken full account of district strategies in their SCS and vice versa. The LAA will be the delivery plan for the County SCS.

6.5 There is much emphasis on the need for local authorities to work in partnership with other agencies and the role of the local authority on the LSP is to be strengthened. The power of local authorities to hold other public bodies to account is also to be strengthened.

6.6 It is expected that further guidance on LSPs and SCSs will be issued by Government in the coming months.

7. MOVING THE MSP FORWARD

7.1 At present the MSP is continuing to progress its agreed actions and develop measures to demonstrate tangible outcomes. The MSP could choose to continue on this course for some time. However, given the wider context, it would be prudent to develop a proactive approach so that the MSP is well placed to take advantage of

opportunities arising from proposed changes to local governance, the LAA and MDC's new corporate direction.

7.2 This approach could comprise a comprehensive review of the direction of the MSP, both in terms of how it operates and also what its future priorities should be. Such a review would need to evaluate and explore the opportunities and impacts of:

- Local Government White Paper
- Local Area Agreement
- SCC's localisation proposals
- Local Development Framework
- Partner priorities, in particular MDC's new corporate priorities and Area Community Partnerships
- Consultation data gathered by partners
- Updated intelligence about the district, its communities and their needs
- Changes to partner organisations, e.g. PCT boundary changes

8. SUGGESTED ACTIONS

8.1 A number of actions are therefore proposed for the MSP to undertake over the next 12 to 18 months:

- Evaluate the implications of the Local Government White Paper
- Respond to the forthcoming guidance on LSPs and Sustainable Community Strategies
- Continue to deliver and monitor progress against the agreed Priority actions
- Continue to ensure links with the LDF
- Dialogue with SCC and SSP on expectations for delivery of LAA at a district level
- Dialogue with and support for MDC on its new priorities
- Analysis of results from MDC General Survey
- Analysis of district intelligence
- Analysis of other partners' priorities
- Analysis of other partners' consultation and engagement data
- Link with MDC's capacity building work on Engaging with Communities, in particular MSP's links to the MDC Area Community Partnerships
- Based on an evaluation of all existing research, develop a programme of community engagement on future MSP priorities, linking with LAA, LDF and other partner consultation requirements where appropriate
- Continue to widen and strengthen the membership of MSP particularly in the voluntary and business sectors
- Based on all of the above, achieve consensus amongst partners about future MSP priorities, possibly through a series of workshops
- Review MSP structures to ensure ability to deliver and monitor priorities, and satisfy new governance requirements
- Review the Community Strategy and republish as a Sustainable Community Strategy to reflect any changes to priorities and actions

8.2 An indicative timeline for these suggested actions is shown overleaf.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The MSP Board is asked:

- To approve the suggested actions in 8 above
- To consider the value of a workshop early in 2007, when current developments are clearer, to explore the opportunities and pressures facing the MSP and agree a more defined way forward

ID	Task Name	arter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Jan	
1								
2	Continue to deliver and monitor progress against the agreed Priority actions	[Blue bar spanning from start to end]						
3	Continue to ensure links with LDF	[Blue bar spanning from start to end]						
4	Dialogue with SCC on expectations for delivery of LAA at a district level	[Blue bar spanning from start to end]						
5	Evaluation of White Paper	[Blue bar]						
6	Dialogue with MDC on its new priorities	[Blue bar]						
7	Analysis of results from MDC General Survey	[Blue bar]						
8	Analysis of district intelligence	[Blue bar]						
9	Analysis of other partners' priorities	[Blue bar]						
10	Analysis of other partners' consultation data	[Blue bar]						
11	Link with MDC's capacity building work on Engaging with Communities	[Blue bar spanning from start to end]						
12	develop a programme of community engagement on future MSP priorities			[Blue bar]				
13	deliver programme of community engagement				[Blue bar]			
14	Achieve consensus amongst partners re future MSP priorities					[Blue bar]		
15	Action Planning					[Blue bar]		
16	Realign MSP structures as required					[Blue bar]		
17	Review the Community Strategy and republish					[Blue bar]		
18	Launch new Sustainable Community Strategy						[Blue diamond]	

Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities

Summary of key issues by chapter

1 Introduction – strong and prosperous communities

- Reshaping public services around citizens and communities who use them
- New ‘Community Calls for Action’ (CCfAs)

2 Responsive Services and Empowered Communities

- Encouraging more systematic intelligence on local views and needs
- Innovative, faster and more frequent communication with citizens on services and Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs) and LAAs
- Promoting neighbourhood management with regard to neighbourhood policing, street clean and facility management
- Government to establish a fund to give local authorities capital support to facilitate transfer of assets to community management or ownership

3 Effective, accountable and responsive local government

- Encouraging more diverse and representative councillors
- Stronger leadership -choice of three executive models, each with four year term:
 - directly elected mayor
 - directly elected executive
 - indirectly elected leader
- All local authorities with leader and executive arrangement will have to adopt new executive arrangements
- Strengthen ways in which local authorities can hold other public bodies to account
- New best practice guidance for overview and scrutiny to be developed, encouraging scrutiny focused on areas, communities or neighbourhoods and on strategic issues including SCS, LAA and other key strategic plans
- Opportunity for two tier areas to seek unitary status. Proposals invited by 25 January 2007
- New models of two tier working. The challenge is greater than for unitaries but expectations are the same. Government is seeking pathfinders for this way of working. Again, proposals invited by 25 January

4 Strong cities, strategic regions

- Focus is very much on cities and city-regions but some acknowledgement of wider impact of ‘economic footprint’ and transport issues. There will need to be careful consideration of how this chapter ‘translates’ for rural area

- Commitment to reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2050. Intention to publish a Planning Policy Statement on climate change, setting out expectations for local planning authorities

5 Local Government as a strategic leader and place shaper

- LSPs as the main vehicle for tackling cross cutting social problems, underpinned by thematic partnerships e.g. CDRPs
- Appropriate for the local authority to be charged with co-ordinating the work of LSP partners. Particular significance attached to ensuring elected members are fully involved in LSP process.
- Expectation for local authority leaders to agree the appointment of an LSP chair
- LAAs to be the delivery plan for the SCS. LAA will then be delivery contract between central and local government and the latter's partners
- Four blocks of LAA funding to form a 'single pot' to increase flexibility and address cross cutting themes, although the four LAA themes will remain.
- Introduction of concept of Multi Area Agreements (MAAs) to encourage greater cross boundary collaboration
- Districts to keep duty to produce Sustainable Community Strategies in partnership with their LSP
- Tying up consultation for SCS, LAA and LDF to reduce consultation fatigue - requirement for LDF SCI to undergo independent examination and binding inspectors report to be repealed
- LDF core strategy to be integrated into district SCSs. Additionally, housing and homelessness strategies should be incorporated in SCS wherever possible
- Will be one piece of statutory BV guidance on key commissioning principles, community participation and competition

6 A new performance framework

- Intention to implement a new performance framework over the next three years to cover all the outcomes for local authorities either alone or working in partnership
- Government to set a single set of national priority outcomes, reflecting Comprehensive Spending Review
- Will limit the number of LAA targets to around 35
- Reduction of national indicators to around 200. This new set will replace other sets including BVPIs and will be outcome measures wherever possible
- removal of requirements to produce BVPP and conduct BV reviews

- New external inspection arrangements:
 - Annual risk assessment
 - Annual scored Use of Resources judgement
 - Annual scored Direction of Travel judgement

7 Efficiency

- More services to be delivered collaboratively
- Maximise use of IT for efficiency and accessibility
- local authorities should integrate asset planning with corporate planning and the local authority's strategic vision for the area
- Move towards three year formula local authority grant settlements – first to cover 2008-2011

8 Community Cohesion

- Aim towards strong cohesive communities where diversity is valued but there is a shared set of values and sense of purpose and belonging
- Local authorities, as community leaders, are seen as best placed to understand the challenges facing their communities and work with partners to decide how to respond and develop a shared vision through the SCS
- Eight Guiding Principles:
 - Strong leadership and engagement
 - Developing shared values
 - Preventing the problems of tomorrow
 - Good information
 - Visible work to tackle inequalities
 - Involving young people
 - Interfaith work
 - Partners to include local third sector organisations

AGENDA ITEM NO: 9



Notes of the Monitoring Group Meeting held 16 November 2006, 2.30 pm at Mendip District Council

Present from MSP: Ron Ballantine (Chair), Richard Dixon, Andrew Freeman,
Michelle Hawkes, Mark Holden, Tony Shepherd

Present from MDC: Allison Herbert, Phil Miller, Sara Skirton

Apologies: Sarah Guscott, Roger Kershaw, Norma Underwood

ACTIONS

(full notes attached at page 3)

Action	By whom
Matters Arising	
Strengthening the Voluntary and Community Sector	
Mendip Community Support is participating in a consortium to tender for a contract with Somerset County Council to manage their volunteers	Tony Shepherd will keep the Group updated on progress at a future meeting
Roles and responsibilities of Trustees and Charity Commission legislation	Richard Dixon to provide Tony Shepherd with information on Community Interest Companies
Invitation to the MCS to attend the Policy Commission Event - 29 th November	Sara Skirton to follow up
Tackling Climate Change Locally	
To make contact with both the Diocesan representative and Pastor Stephen Fowler regarding joint identification of environmental issues for the district	Jo Milling to update the Group at the next meeting

Investing in Children and Young People	
<p>Youth democracy - Youth Parish Councils</p> <p>Increasing youth representation on Parish Councils</p> <p>Invitation to a local Youth MP to make a presentation at a future MSP Board Meeting</p>	<p>Mark Holden to raise at the next meeting of the Somerset Rural Youth Project Advisory Group</p> <p>Sara Skirton agreed to table an item for the next agenda of the Somerset Association of Local Councils</p> <p>Sara Skirton to liaise with Mark Holden</p>
<p>Phase 2 of the participation project - the Mendip Children and Young People Planning Group</p>	<p>Mark Holden to distribute a detailed work plan</p>
<p>Five Priorities' Action Reports</p>	<p>Mark Holden agreed to re-draft the Investing in Children and Young People priority report with the expectation that all remaining priority action reports would be reviewed early in the New Year</p>
Regenerating the Mendip Economy	
<p>Business Link Website</p>	<p>Allison Herbert to circulate a detailed business plan to Group via Sara Skirton</p>



**Notes of the Monitoring Group Meeting
held 16 November 2006, 2.30 pm
at Mendip District Council**

Present from MSP: Ron Ballantine (Chair), Richard Dixon, Andrew Freeman, Michelle Hawkes, Mark Holden, Tony Shepherd

Present from MDC: Allison Herbert, Phil Miller, Sara Skirton

Apologies: Sarah Guscott, Roger Kershaw, Norma Underwood

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and round-table introductions were made.

2. Notes of Monitoring Group Meeting held on 12th September

The notes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record of proceedings.

The Chairman requested clarification of any matters arising from the previous notes and action points which would not be covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Tony Shepherd was pleased to report that a forthcoming Board meeting of the Somerset Voluntary Sector Network will ratify Mendip's involvement in its Management Committee, thus strengthening involvement in the Somerset Strategic Partnership. Mendip Community Support is also participating in a consortium to tender for a contract with Somerset County Council to manage their volunteers. Tony will keep the Group updated on progress at a future meeting.

Richard Dixon confirmed that the first draft of a Mendip Climate Change Strategy had been presented to the September Board meeting of the MSP and had been well-received.

Richard Dixon believed that Jo Milling had made contact with both the Diocesan representative and Pastor Stephen Fowler regarding joint identification of environmental issues for the district. However, the outcome of the discussions is as yet unknown and it is hoped that Jo Milling will be able to update the Group at the next meeting.

With regard to the 'Engaging with Communities' initiative, Sara Skirton reported that various Council Officers have formed a project group to consider ways of improving engagement and how this might be achieved. It is the Council's intention to have a stand at next year's Bath & West Show.

Tony Shepherd reported that on 9th March, Mendip Community Support is organising a voluntary sector conference with an all-encompassing theme of "Pride in Mendip". The event will host various speakers and tri-partite workshop sessions with representatives from local business, the District Council and the voluntary sector. Allison Herbert will liaise with Tony Shepherd on recruiting appropriate participants for the event

3. Progress Update on each Priority Action Plan

Tackling Climate Change Locally

Richard Dixon reported that the actual publication of the Mendip Climate Change Strategy has been delayed slightly to allow the evidence base of the County Council on climate change to be meshed with that of Baker Associates. Notwithstanding, publication is still envisaged by the end of the year. The final Strategy will be taken to the Climate Change Sub-Group prior to its presentation to the MSP Board for final endorsement.

As part of the awareness-raising strand of the Invest to Save Bid, a public event was held on 27th October in the Council Chamber. The event was themed around Energy Saving Week, emphasising easy ways of saving energy both at home and at work. The other aspect of the day was to encourage community groups to campaign in their locality on mitigation of and adaptation to the effects of climate change. It will be possible to provide community groups with takeaway kits to engage with their local communities at fêtes and fayres. The various pieces of equipment include activities such as quizzes, bingo and Jenga, all with a climate change theme, aimed at all ages and are accessible on loan from either Jo Milling or Sara Skirton.

Allison Herbert queried whether any links had been established with the Sustainable Frome project whose membership and activities appear to be growing apace. Richard Dixon confirmed that Jo Milling is in contact with Peter MacFadyen and other members of that group. He also undertook to liaise with Jo Milling on the potential for Mendip District Council to host its forum through its community portal website rather than through Frome Town Talk as at present.

Mark Holden reported that the County Youth Service is organising a County-wide event culminating in a fashion creation event aimed at recycling clothes and goods to recreate something new. The County final takes place on 20th January at Tor Leisure in Glastonbury and he is looking for suggestions on where he might apply for funding for prizes for the winners. The prizes should be

connected with sustainability and with environmental issues and Richard Dixon agreed to review his budget and discuss the matter further with Mark Holden.

Strengthening the Voluntary and Community Sector

Tony Shepherd drew the Group's attention to the fact that the biggest source of training for the voluntary sector has always been Vista who has hitherto offered a free training service. However, Vista is now reviewing its future financial arrangements and it is likely that training for the voluntary sector may have to be paid for in future.

Ongoing difficulties have been experienced with production of the newsletter due to various personnel changes. However, the Editorial panel have met and Tony is hopeful that the first edition will be published by early February 2007.

Progress on establishing links with local businesses is still slow but Tony Shepherd will liaise with Allison Herbert on identifying other potential businesses which might be prepared to participate. He is currently working with a number of voluntary groups who have the same objectives to persuade them to work as a team in order to share and thus stretch resources. He is also negotiating with the Charities Commission to provide a speaker to talk about roles and responsibilities of Trustees at a future MCS meeting. In this connection, Richard Dixon undertook to provide Tony with a copy of a presentation he had prepared on the subject of Community Interest Companies which is sometimes appropriate for community organisations.

In answer to a query from Sara Skirton, Tony has not yet received a direct invitation to the Policy Commission event planned for 29th November at County Hall. Sara will follow this up.

Investing in Children and Young People

Mark Holden updated the Group on the progress made towards a final date of locality team working by the end of March 2008. The MSP has funded a second round of participation work headed up by Barnardos (Children's Fund). The funding has also allowed for the recruitment of a project worker for 2 days per week based at the Enterprise Centre in Frome. The Mendip Children and Young People Planning Group are reviewing the findings of the first phase of the participation project and will form an action plan to address the recommendations contained in the report. Phase 2 is aiming to help embed this model of participation into services for Children and Young People and Mark Holden agreed to distribute a detailed work plan which was tabled at the most recent meeting of the local Planning Group.

In answer to a query from Ron Ballantine regarding achievement of *Every Child Matters* outcomes, Mark confirmed that agencies such as the County Youth

Service and the Primary Care Trust are working on reaching the milestones contained in the action plan. Both the forthcoming OFSTED Inspection and the Joint Area Review will be looking at performance in relation to the *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

After discussion, it was agreed that it would be timely to review all action plans in early 2007 to ensure they are relevant, and to focus on actions that have a Partnership element to them. This, in turn, would enable the Group to see what actions are moving ahead and those which require attention. Mark Holden agreed to re-draft the Investing in Children and Young People priority report and concentrate on the work of the Mendip Children and Young People Planning Group in relation to Phase 2 of the participation project.

On the subject of youth democracy in general, Mark Holden agreed to raise the matter of Youth Parish Councils at the next meeting of the Somerset Rural Youth Project Advisory Group. Sara Skirton agreed to ask about tabling an item for the next agenda of the Somerset Association of Local Councils on increasing youth representation on Parish Councils.

Mark was also pleased to report that Somerset boasts a number of Youth MP's who serve in the UK Youth Parliament and that, in Mendip alone, nearly 4,000 young people voted in the annual Youth Parliament elections. It was agreed that Sara Skirton would liaise with Mark on inviting a local Youth MP to make a presentation at a future meeting of the MSP Board.

Affordable Decent Housing For All

Phil Miller reported that the Council is taking a firm stand with its Preferred Developers to encourage them to provide a certain level of accommodation suitable for the increasing numbers of young single homeless people on the Council's waiting list. Although Parish Councils are also reluctant to approve affordable housing sites, the Council is endeavouring to ensure that this client groups' needs are met.

A new target is being included in the Community Strategy relating to fuel poverty and alternative sources of energy are to be incorporated into the Council's service delivery development plan.

Approximately six staff from the Council had joined other authorities in a series of seminars at South Somerset District Council on the subject of Choice Based Lettings. Various suppliers of IT equipment had made presentations, one of whose systems is likely to be selected.

The Group reiterated its concern over the potential reduction in the Council's future capital programme and hoped that the impact on providing affordable housing could be minimised by such a reduction.

Regarding the proposed Foyer for Young People in Street, although funding is available, the Council's bid for a suitable property in Street had been unsuccessful. Phil Miller will continue his efforts on identifying an alternative site for the project in that area.

Discussion took place on the standards on eco-friendly and energy efficient homes to which the Council should aspire. "Eco-excellent" homes incur an additional development cost of £20,000 per unit, a cost which makes inroads into the funds available for providing new housing. The Group agreed that the MSP must take a balanced view on this matter in relation to both its defined priorities.

Regenerating the Mendip Economy

Allison Herbert circulated an updated document and apologised that it had been unavailable before the meeting. She then provided a verbal report.

Final design detail is currently awaited for the Economy Strategy. An MDC action plan will be developed from activities contained in this document which will be taken forward. As soon as the Strategy is complete, copies will be made available to the MSP Board and published on the Council's website.

The town plan for Glastonbury has been accepted. Cllr Ken Maddock is a member of the partnership group for regenerating the Morlands site. The Council is trying to use the Business Leaders' Group, the sub-group of MSP, as a way of encouraging other organisations such as Strode College to open a dialogue with SWRDA about a presence in Morlands.

Allison Herbert confirmed that Atkins Rail will be carrying out the feasibility study into extending the East Somerset railway into Shepton Mallet – a Shepton 21 initiative funded by the MSP.

A meeting of the Mendip Business Exchange is taking place on 16th November, with a specific focus on tourism. Over 50 businesses are expected to attend and Allison agreed to approach MACOC to make mention of the MSP and its priority on regenerating the Mendip economy at an early opportunity.

Tendering documents are being prepared for the construction of the new Business Link website. The business plan for the website will be circulated to all members of the Group via Sara Skirton. A competition is underway to find a young person to develop a logo for the website and discussions will take place with Frome and Strode Colleges as well as local secondary schools.

A mystery shopper initiative has recently taken place in three towns in the Mendip area and on the basis of the results, it has been decided to offer retail training to traders in these towns. It is hoped that the funding awarded from the

MSP will allow suitable training to take place at a time and place most appropriate for traders.

Michelle Hawkes queried whether the issue of migrant workers has been debated. The Chair confirmed that this was an issue in which the MSP is generally interested in strategic terms since it impacts on several of its five identified priorities, including housing, health and the Mendip Economy. Allison reported that the Business Leaders' Group is very aware of employers' responsibilities to its non-native English speaking workers. The Somerset Intelligence Network (SINE) is also considering the situation and it was agreed that research work may need to be commissioned in Mendip, the results of which will, in turn, be reflected in the Community Strategy.

Phil Miller reported that Guy Braga has been involved in regenerating villages through business opportunities. More specifically, the Council is hoping to develop 'live / work' business units in rural settlements and Allison was confident that an approach to the Opportunity Fund might be successful in attracting funding for such a venture.

4. Progress Towards Developing Outcome Measures

Sara Skirton reported that some outcome measures still need refining and discussions are under way. It was particularly problematic developing appropriate outcomes for the Children and Young People priority when so much work is still waiting to happen. When the action plan is reconfigured, Sara will review the action plan again with Mark Holden and look at potential measures to link with that.

5. November MSP Board – Reports From Monitoring Group

Sara Skirton reported that normal practice has been to attach monitoring reports to the agenda for MSP Board Meetings. Bearing in mind the earlier agreement to revamp each priority's action plan to make them more meaningful, it was agreed that for the next MSP Board Meeting, only the notes from the Monitoring Group Meeting would be included. It was also agreed that it would not be necessary to ask representatives or leads from each priority group to attend the next Board Meeting.

6. Any Other Business

Sara Skirton reported that although an initial database of partners' consultation activities with their communities has been constructed, other information is still outstanding, key of which is that from the Police. Efforts are continuing to chase up the information.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.20 pm.

The Mendip Strategic Partnership

Agenda Item: 10

FROM: Team Leader – Community Planning, Mendip District Council Date: 28 November 2006

SUBJECT: MSP Funding Programme 2005/06, 2006/07 and MSP's own funds

1. SUMMARY/INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report asks Board members to note the position and agree recommendations with regard to:

- claims against 2005/06 second homes monies
- allocation of 2006/07 monies

2. FUNDS AVAILABLE TO THE MSP

Second Homes Monies 2005/06

2.3 Of the £121,490 allocated in 2005/06, £119,935 was committed and at the time of writing £82,385 has been claimed.

2.4 £37,550 has still to be claimed, as shown in table A below:

Table A

Priority	Award	Project / Organisation	Claimed	To be claimed	Notes
Tackling Climate Change Locally	18,750	Community Choices for Sustainable Living (STSD)	10,700	8,050	Final invoice imminent
	10,000	Climate Change Strategy (Baker Associates)	0	10,000	Strategy due December 2006. Payment will be made on completion
	2,000	Env Forum	0	2,000	Claims currently being processed
Regenerating the Mendip Economy	22,500	Economic Strategy –MDC, MACOC	5,000	17,500	Invoice from MACOC for £16,000 due imminently
			Total	37,550	

2.5 Priority Leads have until end March 2007 to spend the 2005/06 allocations.

2.6 £1,555 of the 2005/06 monies has been carried over to 2006/07.

2.7 The process of reviewing 2005/06 expenditure has begun, with progress reports requested where MSP funded projects have been running for six months or more. This review will report to the Budget and Finance Sub Group early in 2007, when any anticipated underspend from 2005/06 will be flagged up.

Second Homes Monies available to the MSP for 2006/07

2.8 The MSP was allocated a total of £101,383 second homes Council Tax monies for 2006/07, made up of £80,600 from Somerset County Council and £20,783 from Mendip District Council.

2.9 In addition it has the carried over forward sum of £1,555 from 2005/06 second homes Council Tax monies.

Also carried over is the underspend of £120 from Wanstrow Village Hall's 2004/05 allocation.

2.10 This means that the MSP had £103,058 to allocate in this current financial year.

2.11 At the last Board meeting the following allocations were agreed:

Table B

Priority / Organisation	Project	MSP award
Tackling Climate Change Locally	Match funding the second year of the Invest to Save Budget "Mendip Partnership for Energy" project,	£6,250.00
	Support second phase of preparation of Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for Mendip	£6,000.00
Affordable Decent Housing for All	Developing a Multi Agency Web based Toolkit - to continue to fund the Project Worker for remainder of the programme.	£12,000.00
Investing in Children and Young People	Mendip Participation Project (MPP). Phase 2.	£18,068.00
Regenerating Mendip Economy	Business Investment Project	£4,000.00
	Website maintenance and updating	
	East Somerset Railway extension feasibility study	£4,000.00
	Retail training for market town traders	£3,000.00
Strengthening the Voluntary and Community Sector	a) Research the current quality standards achieved by the voluntary and community sector	£2,900.00
	b) Upgrade the means of managing the VCS database	£4,400.00
	c) Mendip Forum Conference / Workshops	£1,500.00
Police	Police Community Support Officers in Glastonbury	£10,442.50
	Provision of Electric Bikes to Police Community Support Officers	£2,010.00
Mendip YMCA	Towards delivering the Routes Project in Frome	£7,500.00
	Total	£82,070.50

2.12 This leaves £20,987.50 to be allocated in 2006/07. There is likely to be a number of calls on the remaining monies, for example:

- A revised bid to form a Community Interest Company is expected to come before the Budget and Finance Sub Group in early 2007.
- At the Budget and Finance Sub Group meeting in August 2006 it was suggested that the award of £18,068.00 to Children and Young People priority might be increased to £21,794 at a later date if funds allowed.
- The MSP Board may wish to set aside a proportion of any remaining monies for its own needs such as for community consultation or partnership events.

The MSP's Own Funds

2.13 The MSP has £16,237 of its own 'non-second homes' monies.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Board is asked to agree that the Budget and Finance Sub Group should meet in early 2007 to:

- Review the 2005/06 spending programme and if necessary make recommendations for reallocation of any monies that are unlikely to be spend by 31 March 2007
- Determine how the remaining 2006/07 funds should be allocated, subject to any steer given by the MSP Board at this meeting.

Contact: Sara Skirton 01749 341340
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