

Links are in red

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

Sent: 15 May 2008 15:49
Attach: 8 MSP Funding Programme.doc; 1 Agenda 20.05.08.doc; 3 MSP Minutes 11 03 08.pdf; 8 Appendix A LSP Budgets, Funding Protocol.pdf
Subject: Mendip Strategic Partnership Board Meeting - 20th May 2008

Dear MSP Board Member and colleague

Please find attached an agenda and supporting papers for the MSP Board Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 20th May in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council starting at 2.30pm.

For ease of reference, the documents which should be attached are as follows:-

Agenda, together with:

Agenda Item No 3: Minutes of the previous Board Meeting dated 11th March 2008

Agenda Item No 8: MSP Funding Programme 2008/2009
Agenda Item No 8A: Appendix LSP Budgets Funding Protocol

Can I remind everyone that car parking for visitors is very limited at the Council Offices and I would encourage you to use the Commercial Road public pay and display car park which is approximately 5 minutes' walk from the offices.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible next week but, in the meantime, if there are any queries, please get in touch.

With kind regards.

Pam Newsham
Policy Assistant
(Community Planning and Consultation)

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Mendip District Council
Cannards Grave Road
Shepton Mallet
Somerset
BA4 5BT



Mendip Strategic Partnership
Board Meeting 20 May 2008
2.30pm in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council

Agenda

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Public Participation**
- 3. Minutes of the meeting of 11 March 2008**
- 4. Somerset Youth Volunteering Network (SYVN), the V Project and young people's research project** Presentation from Sue Adams and Nick Phillips from SYVN
- 5. Chairman's update** Verbal report from the Chair on recent events and meetings attended
- 6. The Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework Core Strategy** Verbal update on the Time to Plan programme and the forthcoming Multi Agency workshop in July
- 7. Monitoring the Five Priorities Action Plans** Notes of the Monitoring Group meeting held on 29 April are to follow
- 8. MSP Funding 2008/09** Report about arrangements for second homes council tax monies for 2008/09
- 9. LAA Update** Verbal update
- 10. Mendip District Council Community Partnerships** Update / feedback on MDC community partnerships
- 11. Local Community Planning** Verbal updates for information on Shepton 21 and Vision for Frome
- 12. Any Other Business**
- 13. Dates of future meetings**
Board meeting dates for 2008 are 16 September and 9 December, all commencing at 2.30pm in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council.



Mendip Strategic Partnership

Minutes of the meeting of the Mendip Strategic Partnership held at 2.30 pm on Tuesday 11 March 2008 in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council.

PRESENT: Kay Allen
John Ancill

Penny Baker

Ron Ballantine
Ian Bennett
Robin Bradbury
Richard Dixon
Andrew Freeman
Michelle Hawkes
Sonia Pike
Zena Pollard
Tony Shepherd
Linda Tucker
Stan Wilson

Somerset County Council
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
Mendip Association of Chambers of Commerce
Chair
Strode College
Somerset Association of Local Councils
Mendip Environment Forum
Somerset County Council
Somerset Primary Care Trust
Mendip Citizens' Advice Bureau
Mendip Business Exchange
Mendip Community Support
Natural England
Mendip District Council

MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS PRESENT:

Stuart Brown

Simon Eames
Sarah Guscott

Pam Newsham
Sara Skirton

Director – Corporate Finance and Resources
Team Leader – Planning Policy
Manager – Corporate Support, Strategy and Research (Item 7 only)
Policy Assistant
Team Leader - Community Planning and Consultation

PRESENT FOR ITEM 5

Liz Biron
Joy Williams

Somerset Environmental Records Centre
Somerset County Council

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1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Trevor Ashford, Alan Brunt, Stephen Fowler, Roger Kershaw, Jon Miller, Harvey Siggs, David Thomson and Nikki Watson.</p>	
2	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>There were no matters on which members of the public wished to speak.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of the Meeting on 4 December 2007</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.</p> <p>There were no matters arising which would not be dealt with elsewhere in the meeting.</p>	
4	<p>The MSP and Mendip Community Partnerships</p> <p>The Chair introduced his paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The proposal for discussion is that a representative from each of the three Mendip District Council Community Partnerships be invited to become a member of the MSP Board to bring to the MSP a community view on strategic issues, particularly in relation to development of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Development Framework (LDF). The District Council will, like the other partner organisations on the Board, continue to have only one vote and the intention is that each of these representative councillors will attend to represent and speak for their area communities. This arrangement will be reviewed in a year's time.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed continued attendance by the nominated MSP Board Members at Community Partnership meetings if possible. Richard Dixon explained that the date of the next East Mendip Community Partnership clashes with a planned community engagement workshop organised by the County Council and asked that both the District Council and County Council be encouraged to collaborate over future diary dates. Andrew Freeman acknowledged the need for improved communications and Stuart Brown reported that a cross-county working group chaired by South Somerset Chief Executive, Phil Dolan, is looking at the whole issue of community engagement. This will encompass a review of the relationship between MDC's Community</p>	

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	<p>Partnerships and SCC's Area Working Panels.</p> <p>It was AGREED unanimously that a representative from each of Mendip's Area Community Partnerships be invited to join the Board and that appropriate changes be made to the Partnership Agreement.</p>	SS
5	<p>Mendip Biodiversity Action Plan</p> <p>Liz Biron from Somerset Environmental Records Centre and Joy Williams from Somerset County Council summarised the contents of the Mendip Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) circulated prior to the meeting. The purpose of an LBAP is to help prioritise the allocation of scarce resources in the best way; to translate national targets into local action; to identify what local communities value; to raise awareness of biodiversity and to integrate biodiversity into other plans and policies.</p> <p>The Mendip LBAP has been informed by the South West Nature Map contained in the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Somerset Priority List and local wildlife sites and has prioritised main areas of the landscape on which to concentrate efforts. The Mendip LBAP has selected a number of habitats and species for both county action and localised action and for Mendip, these include Adder, Long Eared Owl, Field Boundaries (dry stone walls), Heathlands, Calcareous and Neutral Grasslands, Woodland, Purple Moor and Rush Pasture.</p> <p>Key actions have been extracted for Mendip District as a local authority which it needs to be carrying out to protect and enhance biodiversity within Mendip. These actions will be entered onto the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) and used to plan work programmes. Liz explained that it would be preferable to identify a lead officer within Mendip District Council to be responsible for reporting in BARS and that the Somerset Biodiversity Management Group would provide all possible advice and assistance.</p> <p>Sara Skirton reported that Janet Wilson, Manager for Development Control at MDC, is currently considering the district perspective on internal capacity and the volume of actions which could fall to the local authority. The Mendip LBAP will also need to be considered in the context of the development of the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>Robin Bradbury, speaking as a representative of parish councils, stressed the importance of managing verges to ensure the safety of pedestrians and, particularly, school children. Liz advised that what is</p>	

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	<p>more important for biodiversity is far more cutting rather than less cutting, so there would be no conflict of interest. It is really only 'Special Road Verges' which need safeguarding. At Robin's request, it was AGREED that the following wording be inserted under the heading 'Natural Succession' on page 4 of the draft Somerset Roadside Verges and Green Lanes Habitat Action Plan - "<i>It is recognised that fuller and more frequent cutting to improve verges for safer pedestrian use would not clash with biodiversity provision</i>".</p> <p>Following discussion it was AGREED to note the Mendip Local Biodiversity Action Plan as presented. However, the Board recommended that further work be carried out to improve the focus on Mendip-specific actions before it is taken forward for consideration by MDC. This will entail discussions involving Janet Wilson, Development Control Manager, Liz Biron, Joy Williams and Richard Dixon to consider fully the implications of the action plans for MDC and its ability to deliver them. The resulting general plan for Mendip could then go forward with the MSP's endorsement for formal consideration to MDC. With regard to funding, the Board accepted that more detailed costing information would be expected at a later stage when it would be subject to challenge by MDC.</p>	<p>SERC</p> <p>MDC/SCC/ SERC/ MSP</p>
6	<p>Chairman's Update</p> <p>7th December - Chair attended a Somerset Strategic Partnership Forum where a representative from the Audit Commission gave an update on negotiating the new Local Area Agreement.</p> <p>13th December – Chair attended a meeting of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, where a criminal damage pilot currently being carried out in two deprived wards in Shepton Mallet and Frome was discussed.</p> <p>22nd January – The Chair reported that a new health and wellbeing sub-group of the LAA is being created out of the former stronger and safer communities sub-group.</p> <p>23rd January – The Chair attended a meeting of the Mendip Area Working Panel at which a number of disbursements were made from its budget to a variety of projects within Mendip. The next meeting of the AWP scheduled for 25th March has been cancelled because the full budget has been disbursed and there is no other business.</p>	

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	<p>28th January – The Chair attended an LAA consultation and workshop event – the main item was a presentation by Fiona Catcher from Somerset County Council on shaping the future for Somerset.</p> <p>29th January – Meeting of the MSP Budget & Finance sub-group, the Minutes of which have been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>1st February – The Chair attended a further meeting of the Somerset Strategic Partnership Forum, where discussion took place on setting priorities for the Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy.</p> <p>8th February – In Ron’s absence Richard Dixon attended a joint meeting of chairs of local strategic partnerships and leaders of all councils to discuss the distribution of second homes monies by Somerset County Council. As Kay Allen, Head of Service, Community Regeneration, is present, it is hoped she will be able to update the Board on the level of funding to be allocated to the MSP for the forthcoming financial year.</p> <p>12th February – In Ron’s absence, Richard Dixon chaired a meeting of the MSP Monitoring Group, the minutes of which have been circulated with the agenda.</p>	
7	<p>Introduction of New National Indicator Set from April 2008 and the LAA Targets</p> <p>Sarah Guscott joined the meeting. She reported that central government has put forward 198 national indicators for local authorities and their partners to replace Best Value indicators. The government expects these bodies to work together to address the specific needs of an area and will primarily be measuring the difference or improvement made to an area. The indicators themselves are subject to a comprehensive consultation process and final definitions are still being worked on. All indicators are expected to be published in their final form by the end of March.</p> <p>Of the 198 indicators, 19 will be measured through a place survey and are based around people’s perception of an area, its cohesiveness and how well people get on with each other. This information will be used to inform the Comprehensive Area Assessment starting in April 2009, by the formation of an evidence base for local government and partners to be judged against, in particular, how they understand the needs and issues of a particular area and collectively having an understanding</p>	

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	<p>about how they can influence issues.</p> <p>The outcomes themselves will be judged in part through the Local Area Agreement – each LAA is required to identify up to 35 of these National Indicators to set as its targets for driving up performance in an area across the board.</p> <p>Additionally, of the 198 National Indicators, there are 16 mandatory educational attainment indicators contained within every LAA. Ian Bennett reported that from 2010 Somerset County Council will be responsible for funding and planning education and training for all young people up to the age of 18 across the county, this having previously been the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council. He considered that the proportion of 16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training is a fundamental indicator of an area’s well-being and was disappointed to note that Somerset is not proposing to include them in its list. Kay Allen pointed out that this indicator may be placed within a secondary tier of indicators linking into a primary indicator such as economic development or crime and disorder reduction.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Sarah for her informative update.</p>	
8	<p>The Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework Update</p> <p>Sara reminded the Board that at the last meeting, she had reported on the excellent opportunities for aligning the processes of developing the Local Development Framework and Core Strategy. The public engagement programme commences in April with an event being held in each of the district’s five towns and will involve asking people about their priorities for their local areas. Display boards will show the eleven themes of the Community Strategy and visitors will be asked what issues really matter to them, both negative and positive. Also on display will be maps of each town and its surrounds to allow people to write their ideas on flags which can be placed in a specific location.</p> <p>The dates and venues for each event will be publicised through ‘Your Mendip’ magazine and there will be an opportunity for participation through both the MDC and MSP websites. Posters, flyers and leaflets will be produced and partners are asked to assist in distributing these through their own internal networks and contacts. Sara would also be interested in any ideas that partners might have for ensuring that ‘hard-to-reach’ or potentially disadvantaged groups are fully brought into the</p>	ALL

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10	<p>MSP Funding Programme</p> <p>Sara drew the Board’s attention to the Minutes of the Budget and Finance Sub-Group (B&FSG) held on 29th January as well as a review of second homes monies allocations for 2006/07 and 2007/08. For the current financial year, all monies have been allocated save for an amount of £378.</p> <p>The Board AGREED to approve the recommendations made by the B&FSG as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allocate £1,000 towards the Health and Social Needs Analysis Group report; • To allocate up to £1,000 to the Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset subject to additional information being received; • To note that, as only £378.26 of 2007/08 second homes monies remains, £621.74 of the award to HSNAG, and any award made to FEDs, would need to be met from the MSP’s own funds or from any underspend from 2006/07 monies; • To carry over the following sums to 2008/9: £10,667 of the £20,000 allocated to the Environment Community Interest Company and £4,000 of the £21,794 allocated to phase 2 of the Mendip Participation Project; • To note the update report on the Mendip Environment Community Interest Company which gives details on its structure and activities during its first year. 	
11	<p>LAA Update</p> <p>Kay Allen, representing Roger Kershaw, brought the Board up-to-date with Somerset County Council’s review of all its financial implications, with Second Homes Council Tax monies being one of its allocations. The allocation of second homes council tax funding from Somerset County Council to each Local Strategic Partnership is being changed to align its investment with the challenges presented by the new Community Strategy for Somerset and the Local Area Agreement.</p> <p>The previous funding approach was appropriate at the time but as Somerset moves towards the Comprehensive Area Assessment, the</p>	

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	<p>County Council needs to ensure that all spending in communities is targeted to achieve a step-change in outcomes and demonstrates good value for money.</p> <p>There were few incentives in the original arrangements for other partners in each LSP to match-fund or even make their own contributions. The County Council has found it difficult for the LSPs to provide clear evidence of the return for their communities from all of the Second Homes Council Tax investment, although some has been targeted to good effect.</p> <p>The funding allocations for Local Strategic Partnerships from SCC for 2008/09 are being based on the level of matched funding by each District Council. Therefore, in order to access their allocations, LSPs will need to confirm match-funding support from their District Council and then submit an investment plan for approval by the Somerset Strategic Partnership's Executive Group. So if a District cannot or does not match-fund the Somerset County Council element of the allocation, the SCC element of the funding will remain with the Somerset Strategic Partnership to help with the delivery of the new Local Area Agreement.</p> <p>For the financial year 2008/09, the SCC second homes monies allocation to Mendip Strategic Partnership is £21,600, contingent on match funding from MDC.</p> <p>All the councils in Somerset are currently working together to review how they are engaging with local communities. The LSPs are part of this process. The results may create new opportunities for LSPs, drawing together a range of resources from all their partners. One example of how SCC might be able to increase the involvement of local County Councillors with their LSPs much more closely is to align the use of their community budgets (£15,000 per Councillor in 2008/09) to help deliver improved outcomes for residents. SCC is suggesting that as many of the final LAA measures as possible are monitored at district, ward and/or super output area level. This should enable all LSPs to take an active role in championing and delivering change in their localities in line with the emerging Local Area Agreement priorities.</p> <p>In 2008/09 the funding will be targeted to outcome areas in the LAA while the remaining second homes funding will be allocated to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Strategic Partnership, including the annual business conference and skills event for young people and integrated 	

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	<p>research and analysis through SINE;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing through rural housing enablers; • Community Safety – being the funding to meet total needed for PCSOs. <p>The Board was disappointed to note the reduced level of allocation and Ian raised the point that LSPs could have been given an opportunity to bid for funding in order to deliver its local priorities. However, it acknowledged that both SCC and MDC remain substantial financial contributors to the work of the MSP and the Board has yet to learn SCC’s future commitment to strategic planning as a whole in Mendip district. The Board was confident that the MSP was not the subject of the implied criticism about how different LSPs in Somerset had allocated, spent and monitored the outcome of their funding expenditure.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Kay for presenting Somerset County Council’s altered arrangements for the allocation of the Second Homes Council Tax funding.</p>	
11	<p>LAA Update</p> <p>Kay Allen reported that some 36 indicators have been put forward for negotiation on inclusion in the LAA and there is still no absolute clarity on the final list. There is a multi-agency negotiating team and the MSP will be asked to ratify David Thomson as a member of that team. Trevor Gillham as lead officer on the LAA has discussed with David Thomson the provision of a workshop to MDC councillors and MSP partners if required. Trevor would be happy to attend such a workshop and the MSP is asked to let either Trevor or David know if they feel such a workshop would be beneficial.</p> <p>Kay reiterated the point that the data and benchmarking in the LAA will be disaggregated county-wide wherever possible. She also pointed out that ‘NEETs’ (the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training) are included as a supporting indicator and developing as part of an action plan for a Somerset skills strategy.</p> <p>Richard Dixon thought that the document is short on environmental objectives and Kay reported that the 35 areas are where we need to improve most or are relatively weak on, actually performing well on</p>	ALL

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	<p>waste, for example. An indicator relating to the environmental theme within the LAA is present but the debate continues around climate change and how it is taken forward by the most appropriate indicator for Somerset.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Kay for attending the meeting.</p>	
12	<p>Mendip District Council Area Community Partnerships</p> <p>There was no update feedback on Area Community Partnerships from nominated Board members. It is hoped that the appointment of ACP representatives on to the MSP Board will strengthen this relationship in future.</p>	
13	<p>Local Community Planning</p> <p>Zena Pollard reported that Shepton 21 has been granted £50,000 from the RDA towards the costs of further feasibility work on the CATEC project.</p> <p>Several training events for traders have been organised by the Somerset Market Towns Forum.</p> <p>Zena continues to work closely with MDC around the consultation event in Shepton Mallet on 9th May and will engage as many community groups as she can in that process.</p> <p>The town centre in Shepton Mallet is currently undergoing a major facelift project and she encouraged all partners to view the results.</p> <p>Vision4Frome - Tony reported that a consultant has been collecting data about Frome and its environs, in order to establish a baseline 'Social and Economic Profile of Frome'. He has conducted interviews with a wide cross-section of local people, including employers, the elderly, retailers, PCSOs, sportspeople, etc. His remit was to identify current issues and appropriate responses as well as defining trends. The final report has now been completed and an electronic copy is available upon request by emailing ourfrome@yahoo.co.uk. Forthcoming events include an Open Consultation Day on 29 March 2008, the joint V4F and MDC consultation event on 16 April and the Open Space Event on 26 April 2008.</p> <p>It was agreed that the item relating to the Glastonbury Town Plan should be removed from future agendas. Ros Wilkins, MDC's Area Regeneration Manager, will have regular discussions with Glastonbury</p>	

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	Town Council on taking the plan forward and it is anticipated that updates will be available at forthcoming MSP meetings.	
<p>14</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Sonia Pike reported that the Legal Services Commission is expected to jointly commission advice services across the whole of Somerset and will be putting this contract out to tender. As a result, the Somerset Advice Network comprising the five district Advice Bureaux is seeking to submit a bid for Big Lottery funding to develop a partnership to co-ordinate a wider forum and training for all ninety advice-giving organizations, members/affiliates of a new expanded Somerset Advice Network. Sonia circulated a form to individual partners on which to write a statement in support of the bid if they were so minded to accompany the application and requested that these be returned to her by 15th March. The Chair received the Board's agreement to complete a supporting statement on behalf of the MSP as a whole.</p> <p>Sonia Pike highlighted the large amount of paperwork associated with today's Board Meeting and, in particular to the Mendip Biodiversity Action Plan. She wondered if significant discussion documents could be projected on to the screen in order to avoid wasteful printing. Ian Bennett thanked Sara for the quality of the paperwork provided, together with her indication of what were the key documents, which he felt was very helpful to conducting the business of the meeting.</p> <p>Sara reported that as part of a strategic housing assessment, MDC will be undergoing an intensive inspection in June. As the provision of affordable, decent housing for all is a current MSP priority, she thought that the Board would be interested in the outcome of this review. A key part of the evidence will be partnership working and Sara forewarned the Board that individual partners might be contacted for their views in relation to MDC's work on housing.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>The next meeting of the MSP Board Meeting will take place on 20th May 2008 in the Council Chamber at Mendip District Council offices, commencing at 2.30 pm.</p> <p>Members are asked to note future dates for 2008 as follows:-</p> <p>Tuesday, 16th September</p>	

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	<p>Tuesday, 9th December</p> <p>All to commence at 2.30pm in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council.</p> <p><u>Monitoring Group</u></p> <p>Tuesday 29th April 10.00 -12.30</p> <p>Thursday 4th September 10.00 - 12.30</p> <p>Tuesday 25th November 10.00 - 12.30</p> <p><u>Budget and Finance Sub-Group</u></p> <p>Friday, 25th April 10.00 – 12.30 (TBC)</p> <p>Tuesday 22nd July 10.00 - 12.30</p> <p>Tuesday 11th November 10.00 - 12.30</p>	

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5.05pm.

The Mendip Strategic Partnership

Agenda Item: 8

FROM: Team Leader – Community Planning, Mendip District Council Date: 20 May 2008

SUBJECT: MSP Funding 2008/09 and MSP's own funds

1. SUMMARY/INTRODUCTION

1.1 At the Board meeting on 11 March, members noted that there was to be a reduction in the amount of second homes Council Tax monies allocated by Somerset County Council to Somerset district LSPs for 2008/09 onwards. Additionally there would be changes in the way that the funding is accessed.

1.2 A draft protocol regarding the administration of LSP budgets and a proforma for submitting spending plans were considered at the LSP Chairs meeting on 27 March.

1.3 Further to discussions at that meeting, some changes were made to these documents.

2. SECOND HOMES COUNCIL TAX MONIES ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2008/09

2.1 In April LSP Chairs and co-ordinators received a letter from the Group Manager – Corporate Finance, Somerset County Council. This letter responds to the points raised at the LSP Chairs meeting and includes a revised protocol and proforma.

2.1 The letter accompanies this report as Appendix A. Some of the key changes to previous arrangements are below:

- any County Council funding will need to be match funded by the District Council.
- County Council funding is capped at the level of District Council support to LSPs in 2007/08. For Mendip this is £21,600. This means that the maximum 2008/09 second homes Council Tax monies available to the MSP would be £43,200
- spending plans need to demonstrate how projects will help to achieve the new Local Area Agreement targets.
- spending plans are to be submitted to Somerset County Council and will be considered by the Somerset Strategic Partnership (SSP) Executive Group
- the dates of SSP Executive Group meetings for the remainder of 2008 are 8 September and 1 December. Spending plans would need to be submitted at least 10 days in advance of an Executive meeting.

3. MSP'S OWN FUNDS

3.3 The MSP currently has £15,103 of its own non-second homes monies.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Board members are asked to note the changes to the funding arrangements.

4.2 Additionally it is suggested that the Budget and Finance Sub Group, at its meeting on 22 July, be asked to consider these new arrangements in detail and work towards developing a proposed spending plan for 2008/09. The Group should take into account:

- any points raised at this Board meeting
- the current MSP priorities
- the work to refresh our Sustainable Community Strategy
- the new LAA targets.

Contact: Sara Skirton 01749 341340 skirtons@mendip.gov.uk

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I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible next week but, in the meantime, if there are any queries, please get in touch.

With kind regards.

Pam Newsham
Policy Assistant
(Community Planning and Consultation)

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E-mail: newshamp@mendip.gov.uk

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Mendip Strategic Partnership
Board Meeting 20 May 2008
2.30pm in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council

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John Ancill

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Somerset County Council
Somerset Primary Care Trust
Mendip Citizens' Advice Bureau
Mendip Business Exchange
Mendip Community Support
Natural England
Mendip District Council

MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS PRESENT:

Stuart Brown

Simon Eames
Sarah Guscott

Pam Newsham
Sara Skirton

Director – Corporate Finance and Resources
Team Leader – Planning Policy
Manager – Corporate Support, Strategy and Research (Item 7 only)
Policy Assistant
Team Leader - Community Planning and Consultation

PRESENT FOR ITEM 5

Liz Biron
Joy Williams

Somerset Environmental Records Centre
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2	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>There were no matters on which members of the public wished to speak.</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of the Meeting on 4 December 2007</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.</p> <p>There were no matters arising which would not be dealt with elsewhere in the meeting.</p>	
4	<p>The MSP and Mendip Community Partnerships</p> <p>The Chair introduced his paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The proposal for discussion is that a representative from each of the three Mendip District Council Community Partnerships be invited to become a member of the MSP Board to bring to the MSP a community view on strategic issues, particularly in relation to development of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Development Framework (LDF). The District Council will, like the other partner organisations on the Board, continue to have only one vote and the intention is that each of these representative councillors will attend to represent and speak for their area communities. This arrangement will be reviewed in a year's time.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed continued attendance by the nominated MSP Board Members at Community Partnership meetings if possible. Richard Dixon explained that the date of the next East Mendip Community Partnership clashes with a planned community engagement workshop organised by the County Council and asked that both the District Council and County Council be encouraged to collaborate over future diary dates. Andrew Freeman acknowledged the need for improved communications and Stuart Brown reported that a cross-county working group chaired by South Somerset Chief Executive, Phil Dolan, is looking at the whole issue of community engagement. This will encompass a review of the relationship between MDC's Community</p>	

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	<p>Partnerships and SCC's Area Working Panels.</p> <p>It was AGREED unanimously that a representative from each of Mendip's Area Community Partnerships be invited to join the Board and that appropriate changes be made to the Partnership Agreement.</p>	SS
5	<p>Mendip Biodiversity Action Plan</p> <p>Liz Biron from Somerset Environmental Records Centre and Joy Williams from Somerset County Council summarised the contents of the Mendip Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) circulated prior to the meeting. The purpose of an LBAP is to help prioritise the allocation of scarce resources in the best way; to translate national targets into local action; to identify what local communities value; to raise awareness of biodiversity and to integrate biodiversity into other plans and policies.</p> <p>The Mendip LBAP has been informed by the South West Nature Map contained in the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Somerset Priority List and local wildlife sites and has prioritised main areas of the landscape on which to concentrate efforts. The Mendip LBAP has selected a number of habitats and species for both county action and localised action and for Mendip, these include Adder, Long Eared Owl, Field Boundaries (dry stone walls), Heathlands, Calcareous and Neutral Grasslands, Woodland, Purple Moor and Rush Pasture.</p> <p>Key actions have been extracted for Mendip District as a local authority which it needs to be carrying out to protect and enhance biodiversity within Mendip. These actions will be entered onto the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS) and used to plan work programmes. Liz explained that it would be preferable to identify a lead officer within Mendip District Council to be responsible for reporting in BARS and that the Somerset Biodiversity Management Group would provide all possible advice and assistance.</p> <p>Sara Skirton reported that Janet Wilson, Manager for Development Control at MDC, is currently considering the district perspective on internal capacity and the volume of actions which could fall to the local authority. The Mendip LBAP will also need to be considered in the context of the development of the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>Robin Bradbury, speaking as a representative of parish councils, stressed the importance of managing verges to ensure the safety of pedestrians and, particularly, school children. Liz advised that what is</p>	

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	<p>more important for biodiversity is far more cutting rather than less cutting, so there would be no conflict of interest. It is really only 'Special Road Verges' which need safeguarding. At Robin's request, it was AGREED that the following wording be inserted under the heading 'Natural Succession' on page 4 of the draft Somerset Roadside Verges and Green Lanes Habitat Action Plan - "<i>It is recognised that fuller and more frequent cutting to improve verges for safer pedestrian use would not clash with biodiversity provision</i>".</p> <p>Following discussion it was AGREED to note the Mendip Local Biodiversity Action Plan as presented. However, the Board recommended that further work be carried out to improve the focus on Mendip-specific actions before it is taken forward for consideration by MDC. This will entail discussions involving Janet Wilson, Development Control Manager, Liz Biron, Joy Williams and Richard Dixon to consider fully the implications of the action plans for MDC and its ability to deliver them. The resulting general plan for Mendip could then go forward with the MSP's endorsement for formal consideration to MDC. With regard to funding, the Board accepted that more detailed costing information would be expected at a later stage when it would be subject to challenge by MDC.</p>	<p>SERC</p> <p>MDC/SCC/ SERC/ MSP</p>
6	<p>Chairman's Update</p> <p>7th December - Chair attended a Somerset Strategic Partnership Forum where a representative from the Audit Commission gave an update on negotiating the new Local Area Agreement.</p> <p>13th December – Chair attended a meeting of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, where a criminal damage pilot currently being carried out in two deprived wards in Shepton Mallet and Frome was discussed.</p> <p>22nd January – The Chair reported that a new health and wellbeing sub-group of the LAA is being created out of the former stronger and safer communities sub-group.</p> <p>23rd January – The Chair attended a meeting of the Mendip Area Working Panel at which a number of disbursements were made from its budget to a variety of projects within Mendip. The next meeting of the AWP scheduled for 25th March has been cancelled because the full budget has been disbursed and there is no other business.</p>	

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	<p>28th January – The Chair attended an LAA consultation and workshop event – the main item was a presentation by Fiona Catcher from Somerset County Council on shaping the future for Somerset.</p> <p>29th January – Meeting of the MSP Budget & Finance sub-group, the Minutes of which have been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>1st February – The Chair attended a further meeting of the Somerset Strategic Partnership Forum, where discussion took place on setting priorities for the Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy.</p> <p>8th February – In Ron’s absence Richard Dixon attended a joint meeting of chairs of local strategic partnerships and leaders of all councils to discuss the distribution of second homes monies by Somerset County Council. As Kay Allen, Head of Service, Community Regeneration, is present, it is hoped she will be able to update the Board on the level of funding to be allocated to the MSP for the forthcoming financial year.</p> <p>12th February – In Ron’s absence, Richard Dixon chaired a meeting of the MSP Monitoring Group, the minutes of which have been circulated with the agenda.</p>	
7	<p>Introduction of New National Indicator Set from April 2008 and the LAA Targets</p> <p>Sarah Guscott joined the meeting. She reported that central government has put forward 198 national indicators for local authorities and their partners to replace Best Value indicators. The government expects these bodies to work together to address the specific needs of an area and will primarily be measuring the difference or improvement made to an area. The indicators themselves are subject to a comprehensive consultation process and final definitions are still being worked on. All indicators are expected to be published in their final form by the end of March.</p> <p>Of the 198 indicators, 19 will be measured through a place survey and are based around people’s perception of an area, its cohesiveness and how well people get on with each other. This information will be used to inform the Comprehensive Area Assessment starting in April 2009, by the formation of an evidence base for local government and partners to be judged against, in particular, how they understand the needs and issues of a particular area and collectively having an understanding</p>	

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	<p>about how they can influence issues.</p> <p>The outcomes themselves will be judged in part through the Local Area Agreement – each LAA is required to identify up to 35 of these National Indicators to set as its targets for driving up performance in an area across the board.</p> <p>Additionally, of the 198 National Indicators, there are 16 mandatory educational attainment indicators contained within every LAA. Ian Bennett reported that from 2010 Somerset County Council will be responsible for funding and planning education and training for all young people up to the age of 18 across the county, this having previously been the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council. He considered that the proportion of 16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training is a fundamental indicator of an area’s well-being and was disappointed to note that Somerset is not proposing to include them in its list. Kay Allen pointed out that this indicator may be placed within a secondary tier of indicators linking into a primary indicator such as economic development or crime and disorder reduction.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Sarah for her informative update.</p>	
8	<p>The Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework Update</p> <p>Sara reminded the Board that at the last meeting, she had reported on the excellent opportunities for aligning the processes of developing the Local Development Framework and Core Strategy. The public engagement programme commences in April with an event being held in each of the district’s five towns and will involve asking people about their priorities for their local areas. Display boards will show the eleven themes of the Community Strategy and visitors will be asked what issues really matter to them, both negative and positive. Also on display will be maps of each town and its surrounds to allow people to write their ideas on flags which can be placed in a specific location.</p> <p>The dates and venues for each event will be publicised through ‘Your Mendip’ magazine and there will be an opportunity for participation through both the MDC and MSP websites. Posters, flyers and leaflets will be produced and partners are asked to assist in distributing these through their own internal networks and contacts. Sara would also be interested in any ideas that partners might have for ensuring that ‘hard-to-reach’ or potentially disadvantaged groups are fully brought into the</p>	ALL

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
10	<p>MSP Funding Programme</p> <p>Sara drew the Board’s attention to the Minutes of the Budget and Finance Sub-Group (B&FSG) held on 29th January as well as a review of second homes monies allocations for 2006/07 and 2007/08. For the current financial year, all monies have been allocated save for an amount of £378.</p> <p>The Board AGREED to approve the recommendations made by the B&FSG as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allocate £1,000 towards the Health and Social Needs Analysis Group report; • To allocate up to £1,000 to the Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset subject to additional information being received; • To note that, as only £378.26 of 2007/08 second homes monies remains, £621.74 of the award to HSNAG, and any award made to FEDs, would need to be met from the MSP’s own funds or from any underspend from 2006/07 monies; • To carry over the following sums to 2008/9: £10,667 of the £20,000 allocated to the Environment Community Interest Company and £4,000 of the £21,794 allocated to phase 2 of the Mendip Participation Project; • To note the update report on the Mendip Environment Community Interest Company which gives details on its structure and activities during its first year. 	
11	<p>LAA Update</p> <p>Kay Allen, representing Roger Kershaw, brought the Board up-to-date with Somerset County Council’s review of all its financial implications, with Second Homes Council Tax monies being one of its allocations. The allocation of second homes council tax funding from Somerset County Council to each Local Strategic Partnership is being changed to align its investment with the challenges presented by the new Community Strategy for Somerset and the Local Area Agreement.</p> <p>The previous funding approach was appropriate at the time but as Somerset moves towards the Comprehensive Area Assessment, the</p>	

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	<p>County Council needs to ensure that all spending in communities is targeted to achieve a step-change in outcomes and demonstrates good value for money.</p> <p>There were few incentives in the original arrangements for other partners in each LSP to match-fund or even make their own contributions. The County Council has found it difficult for the LSPs to provide clear evidence of the return for their communities from all of the Second Homes Council Tax investment, although some has been targeted to good effect.</p> <p>The funding allocations for Local Strategic Partnerships from SCC for 2008/09 are being based on the level of matched funding by each District Council. Therefore, in order to access their allocations, LSPs will need to confirm match-funding support from their District Council and then submit an investment plan for approval by the Somerset Strategic Partnership's Executive Group. So if a District cannot or does not match-fund the Somerset County Council element of the allocation, the SCC element of the funding will remain with the Somerset Strategic Partnership to help with the delivery of the new Local Area Agreement.</p> <p>For the financial year 2008/09, the SCC second homes monies allocation to Mendip Strategic Partnership is £21,600, contingent on match funding from MDC.</p> <p>All the councils in Somerset are currently working together to review how they are engaging with local communities. The LSPs are part of this process. The results may create new opportunities for LSPs, drawing together a range of resources from all their partners. One example of how SCC might be able to increase the involvement of local County Councillors with their LSPs much more closely is to align the use of their community budgets (£15,000 per Councillor in 2008/09) to help deliver improved outcomes for residents. SCC is suggesting that as many of the final LAA measures as possible are monitored at district, ward and/or super output area level. This should enable all LSPs to take an active role in championing and delivering change in their localities in line with the emerging Local Area Agreement priorities.</p> <p>In 2008/09 the funding will be targeted to outcome areas in the LAA while the remaining second homes funding will be allocated to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somerset Strategic Partnership, including the annual business conference and skills event for young people and integrated 	

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	<p>research and analysis through SINE;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing through rural housing enablers; • Community Safety – being the funding to meet total needed for PCSOs. <p>The Board was disappointed to note the reduced level of allocation and Ian raised the point that LSPs could have been given an opportunity to bid for funding in order to deliver its local priorities. However, it acknowledged that both SCC and MDC remain substantial financial contributors to the work of the MSP and the Board has yet to learn SCC’s future commitment to strategic planning as a whole in Mendip district. The Board was confident that the MSP was not the subject of the implied criticism about how different LSPs in Somerset had allocated, spent and monitored the outcome of their funding expenditure.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Kay for presenting Somerset County Council’s altered arrangements for the allocation of the Second Homes Council Tax funding.</p>	
11	<p>LAA Update</p> <p>Kay Allen reported that some 36 indicators have been put forward for negotiation on inclusion in the LAA and there is still no absolute clarity on the final list. There is a multi-agency negotiating team and the MSP will be asked to ratify David Thomson as a member of that team. Trevor Gillham as lead officer on the LAA has discussed with David Thomson the provision of a workshop to MDC councillors and MSP partners if required. Trevor would be happy to attend such a workshop and the MSP is asked to let either Trevor or David know if they feel such a workshop would be beneficial.</p> <p>Kay reiterated the point that the data and benchmarking in the LAA will be disaggregated county-wide wherever possible. She also pointed out that ‘NEETs’ (the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training) are included as a supporting indicator and developing as part of an action plan for a Somerset skills strategy.</p> <p>Richard Dixon thought that the document is short on environmental objectives and Kay reported that the 35 areas are where we need to improve most or are relatively weak on, actually performing well on</p>	ALL

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	<p>waste, for example. An indicator relating to the environmental theme within the LAA is present but the debate continues around climate change and how it is taken forward by the most appropriate indicator for Somerset.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Kay for attending the meeting.</p>	
12	<p>Mendip District Council Area Community Partnerships</p> <p>There was no update feedback on Area Community Partnerships from nominated Board members. It is hoped that the appointment of ACP representatives on to the MSP Board will strengthen this relationship in future.</p>	
13	<p>Local Community Planning</p> <p>Zena Pollard reported that Shepton 21 has been granted £50,000 from the RDA towards the costs of further feasibility work on the CATEC project.</p> <p>Several training events for traders have been organised by the Somerset Market Towns Forum.</p> <p>Zena continues to work closely with MDC around the consultation event in Shepton Mallet on 9th May and will engage as many community groups as she can in that process.</p> <p>The town centre in Shepton Mallet is currently undergoing a major facelift project and she encouraged all partners to view the results.</p> <p>Vision4Frome - Tony reported that a consultant has been collecting data about Frome and its environs, in order to establish a baseline 'Social and Economic Profile of Frome'. He has conducted interviews with a wide cross-section of local people, including employers, the elderly, retailers, PCSOs, sportspeople, etc. His remit was to identify current issues and appropriate responses as well as defining trends. The final report has now been completed and an electronic copy is available upon request by emailing ourfrome@yahoo.co.uk. Forthcoming events include an Open Consultation Day on 29 March 2008, the joint V4F and MDC consultation event on 16 April and the Open Space Event on 26 April 2008.</p> <p>It was agreed that the item relating to the Glastonbury Town Plan should be removed from future agendas. Ros Wilkins, MDC's Area Regeneration Manager, will have regular discussions with Glastonbury</p>	

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	Town Council on taking the plan forward and it is anticipated that updates will be available at forthcoming MSP meetings.	
<p>14</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Sonia Pike reported that the Legal Services Commission is expected to jointly commission advice services across the whole of Somerset and will be putting this contract out to tender. As a result, the Somerset Advice Network comprising the five district Advice Bureaux is seeking to submit a bid for Big Lottery funding to develop a partnership to co-ordinate a wider forum and training for all ninety advice-giving organizations, members/affiliates of a new expanded Somerset Advice Network. Sonia circulated a form to individual partners on which to write a statement in support of the bid if they were so minded to accompany the application and requested that these be returned to her by 15th March. The Chair received the Board's agreement to complete a supporting statement on behalf of the MSP as a whole.</p> <p>Sonia Pike highlighted the large amount of paperwork associated with today's Board Meeting and, in particular to the Mendip Biodiversity Action Plan. She wondered if significant discussion documents could be projected on to the screen in order to avoid wasteful printing. Ian Bennett thanked Sara for the quality of the paperwork provided, together with her indication of what were the key documents, which he felt was very helpful to conducting the business of the meeting.</p> <p>Sara reported that as part of a strategic housing assessment, MDC will be undergoing an intensive inspection in June. As the provision of affordable, decent housing for all is a current MSP priority, she thought that the Board would be interested in the outcome of this review. A key part of the evidence will be partnership working and Sara forewarned the Board that individual partners might be contacted for their views in relation to MDC's work on housing.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>The next meeting of the MSP Board Meeting will take place on 20th May 2008 in the Council Chamber at Mendip District Council offices, commencing at 2.30 pm.</p> <p>Members are asked to note future dates for 2008 as follows:-</p> <p>Tuesday, 16th September</p>	

Agenda Item Number	Details	Actioned by
	<p>Tuesday, 9th December</p> <p>All to commence at 2.30pm in the Council Chamber, Mendip District Council.</p> <p><u>Monitoring Group</u></p> <p>Tuesday 29th April 10.00 -12.30</p> <p>Thursday 4th September 10.00 - 12.30</p> <p>Tuesday 25th November 10.00 - 12.30</p> <p><u>Budget and Finance Sub-Group</u></p> <p>Friday, 25th April 10.00 – 12.30 (TBC)</p> <p>Tuesday 22nd July 10.00 - 12.30</p> <p>Tuesday 11th November 10.00 - 12.30</p>	

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5.05pm.

The Mendip Strategic Partnership

Agenda Item: 8

FROM: Team Leader – Community Planning, Mendip District Council Date: 20 May 2008

SUBJECT: MSP Funding 2008/09 and MSP's own funds

1. SUMMARY/INTRODUCTION

1.1 At the Board meeting on 11 March, members noted that there was to be a reduction in the amount of second homes Council Tax monies allocated by Somerset County Council to Somerset district LSPs for 2008/09 onwards. Additionally there would be changes in the way that the funding is accessed.

1.2 A draft protocol regarding the administration of LSP budgets and a proforma for submitting spending plans were considered at the LSP Chairs meeting on 27 March.

1.3 Further to discussions at that meeting, some changes were made to these documents.

2. SECOND HOMES COUNCIL TAX MONIES ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2008/09

2.1 In April LSP Chairs and co-ordinators received a letter from the Group Manager – Corporate Finance, Somerset County Council. This letter responds to the points raised at the LSP Chairs meeting and includes a revised protocol and proforma.

2.1 The letter accompanies this report as Appendix A. Some of the key changes to previous arrangements are below:

- any County Council funding will need to be match funded by the District Council.
- County Council funding is capped at the level of District Council support to LSPs in 2007/08. For Mendip this is £21,600. This means that the maximum 2008/09 second homes Council Tax monies available to the MSP would be £43,200
- spending plans need to demonstrate how projects will help to achieve the new Local Area Agreement targets.
- spending plans are to be submitted to Somerset County Council and will be considered by the Somerset Strategic Partnership (SSP) Executive Group
- the dates of SSP Executive Group meetings for the remainder of 2008 are 8 September and 1 December. Spending plans would need to be submitted at least 10 days in advance of an Executive meeting.

3. MSP'S OWN FUNDS

3.3 The MSP currently has £15,103 of its own non-second homes monies.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Board members are asked to note the changes to the funding arrangements.

4.2 Additionally it is suggested that the Budget and Finance Sub Group, at its meeting on 22 July, be asked to consider these new arrangements in detail and work towards developing a proposed spending plan for 2008/09. The Group should take into account:

- any points raised at this Board meeting
- the current MSP priorities
- the work to refresh our Sustainable Community Strategy
- the new LAA targets.

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