

Report to: East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP)
Date: 14 January 2010
Title: ESSP Governance
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Purpose: To present the final recommendations following governance discussions.

Recommendation: That the ESSP:

1. To allow the ESSP Support Team delegated authority to formalise the membership of a number of key organisation and partnerships on the East Sussex Assembly,
2. Consider whether District and Borough Local Strategic Partnerships should each have a formal seat on the ESSP,
3. Consider whether SpeakUp should have an additional representative, and
4. Consider whether an additional business representative should be appointed

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Following the ESSP governance consultation in summer 2009, interim updates were made to the constitution. However, three areas required further discussion, namely ESSP's relationship with SpeakUp, District and Borough Local Strategic Partnerships and countywide thematic partnerships. Since the governance consultation work took place, it is also timely to consider private sector representation on the ESSP.
- 1.2. This report presents a summary of the discussions held in these areas and provides recommendations for the partnership to consider.

2. East Sussex Assembly

- 2.1. At the last meeting (October 09), the ESSP agreed interim changes to the Constitution, which included formalising the East Sussex Assembly as the consultative and advisory forum which supports the ESSP. The East Sussex Assembly's terms of reference were also amended to restrict its membership to countywide organisations, networks and partnerships (unless no countywide structure exists) that are interested and/or involved in the delivery of Pride of Place.
- 2.2. Based on this agreement, the ESSP Support Team have identified a number of organisations and partnerships which are key to delivering Pride of Place and recommend that their position on the East Sussex Assembly be formalised, with delegated authority to do so. This then limits the need to consult the partnership on each new addition unless there are issues which require the partnership's input.

3. Countywide Thematic Partnerships

- 3.1. Key countywide thematic partnerships do not currently have a formal seat on ESSP. A pre-meet was held prior the ESSP meeting on 2 Oct 2009 to discuss the relationship between partnerships and how this could be improved.
- 3.2. Countywide thematic partnership Chairs and Coordinators expressed a joint wish to improve their relationship with ESSP, particularly in light of the new financial constraints which will place even greater emphasis on efficient partnership working.

- 3.3. It was agreed that countywide thematic partnership Coordinators would meet with the Chair of the ESSP prior to every ESSP meeting to ensure that any relevant agenda items could be commented on and discussed.
- 3.4. It was also agreed that the ESSP's website could link to each of the countywide thematic partnership websites for meeting dates and that ESSP's monthly e-News bulletin should contain brief summaries of the relevant countywide meetings.

4. District and Borough Local Strategic Partnerships

- 4.1. While District and Borough Councils have a formal seat on ESSP, District and Borough Local Strategic Partnerships currently do not. This issue was discussed at the LSP Chairs and Coordinators meeting on 22 September 2009.
- 4.2. Overall, the District and Borough Local Strategic Partnerships expressed a wish to have a formal seat on the ESSP for each of the LSPs, in addition to the District and Borough Council seats. It is proposed that each LSP would have the authority to decide whether the representative from the council would fulfil both roles, or whether an additional representative attends.
- 4.3. The proposal put forward is based on the coordination and delivery oversight role District and Borough Local Strategic Partnerships fulfil in relation to Pride of Place, including tackling local blockages. The proposal is also suggested in the interests of demonstrating a commitment to inclusion at a more locality-specific level, particularly in light on the emphasis placed on partnership working through Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).
- 4.4. This proposal is supported by all the District and Borough Councils.

5. SpeakUp

- 5.1. Currently SpeakUp, as a countywide Voluntary and Community Sector forum (VCS), have two representatives on the ESSP, in addition to VCS representation from rural communities (Action in Rural Sussex) and faith communities (Churches Together in Sussex).
- 5.2. Overall, the current VCS representatives expressed a wish to increase the number of representatives provided through SpeakUp from two to three, while clarifying the particular representation that Action in Rural Sussex and Churches Together in Sussex provide.
- 5.3. The proposal put forward is based on key role that the Voluntary and Community Sector play in embedding participatory democracy within the partnership. While the categorisation of the VCS used by SpeakUp, namely into those representing communities of place, interest and identity, was discussed it was felt that this categorisation may overly restrict representation. Therefore, the proposal is to increase the number of representatives to three without restricting to categories so that the focus is on empowering and supporting the sector to be represented at a strategic level.

6. Business representatives

- 6.1. This area was not initially highlighted through the governance consultation as needing further investigation. However, in light of the closure of the East Sussex Business Board and the new local economic assessment duty, it is timely to review private sector representation on the ESSP.
- 6.2. Currently the business sector is represented by the Federation of Small Businesses and the Hastings and Bexhill Economic Alliance.
- 6.3. There is a wish to add an additional representative, therefore increasing the number of representatives from the private sector to three.

- 6.4. The proposal put forward is based on the new local economic assessment duty which will lead to the development of a new countywide economic development strategy, with the ESSP being best placed to lead this work. The rationale for an additional private sector representative is the critical role the private sector plays in the county and ensuring that its needs and contributions are articulated at a strategic level.

7. Decision timescales

- 7.1. In light of the wider context, particularly diminishing public resources, which are likely to impact heavily on the work of the ESSP, three potential actions have been identified regarding these governance proposals:
- i) To agree and enshrine within the Constitution, any changes made today by the ESSP.
 - ii) To agree and enshrine within the Constitution as interim solutions, any changes made today by the ESSP.
 - iii) To suspend any governance decisions until the wider context and its implications for the partnership have been thoroughly discussed.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. The proposals put forward aim to improve the representation from the Voluntary and Community Sector (SpeakUp) and private sector, in addition to improving the connections to work carried out by theme (countywide thematic partnerships) and by geography (district and borough LSPs).
- 8.2. In total, there are proposals to add a further 7 representatives to the membership of the ESSP, which would raise the total number to 31 (including two observers).
- 8.3. Taken as a whole, this potentially adds to the administrative burden of supporting the partnership by the ESSP team at East Sussex County Council. In practical terms, it would also restrict the number of venues which the ESSP can utilise for meetings primarily to the six council chambers across East Sussex.
- 8.4. The partnership needs to consider the added value provided by each of the proposed additions in representation and be assured that size of the partnership remains manageable in terms of its ability to remain an efficient decision-making body, while ensuring that sectors, themes and geographies are represented as appropriately as possible.
- 8.5. The partnership also need to consider the value of each separate proposal in light of the wider context and the changing environment in which ESSP operates, particularly diminishing public resources.