



## Lewes District Strategic Partnership

A Case Study

# Partnership Works...

## Lewes Local Area Partnerships

A series of geographical partnerships set up across the Lewes District have given different communities a voice on local issues. These partnerships have been able to gain funding and complete projects from heritage trails to youth shelters which have brought real value to local residents. Local Area Partnerships have encouraged local residents to get involved and make a difference to area in which they live, as well as providing a clear connection to the Lewes District Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).





## The Challenge

Lewes has always been a diverse district, both in terms of its geography with its mixture of coast, urban and rural areas, and in terms of the communities that live within its borders. With a population of 95,193 (CACI, 2008), Lewes District covers an area of 292 sq km with 14.5 km of coastline. The district includes a large rural area, much of which is part of the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with five main towns, as well as 28 parishes.

In 2001 East Sussex County Council were working on a project bid in order to make improvements to coastal towns in East Sussex. As part of this bid, area-based partnerships were to be established in Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford. These partnerships were also an opportunity to reflect Lewes' diverse communities in a number of forums including the Lewes District LSP.

## The Action

Lewes District LSP began a district-wide publicity campaign to highlight the opportunity for local residents and groups to become involved in this new initiative. The LSP took expressions of interest from a number of interested local people, making sure that as many people as possible could get involved, as well as securing support from local town and parish councils.

The original work put into developing these partnerships was extended to include two more Local Area Partnerships - Lewes Town and another rural partnership. One of the biggest challenges to developing Local Area Partnerships was how to accommodate rural areas where, in some places, there were a large number of parish councils, each with their own community identity. However, the extra support needed to coordinate these partnerships has paid dividends with the rural partnerships receiving some of the strongest support from the local community.

Each of the Area Partnerships is unique; 4 out of 5 of them are charitable and limited companies in their own right, with key members also holding director posts. All have their own constitutions and terms of reference as part of the requirements of being a company.



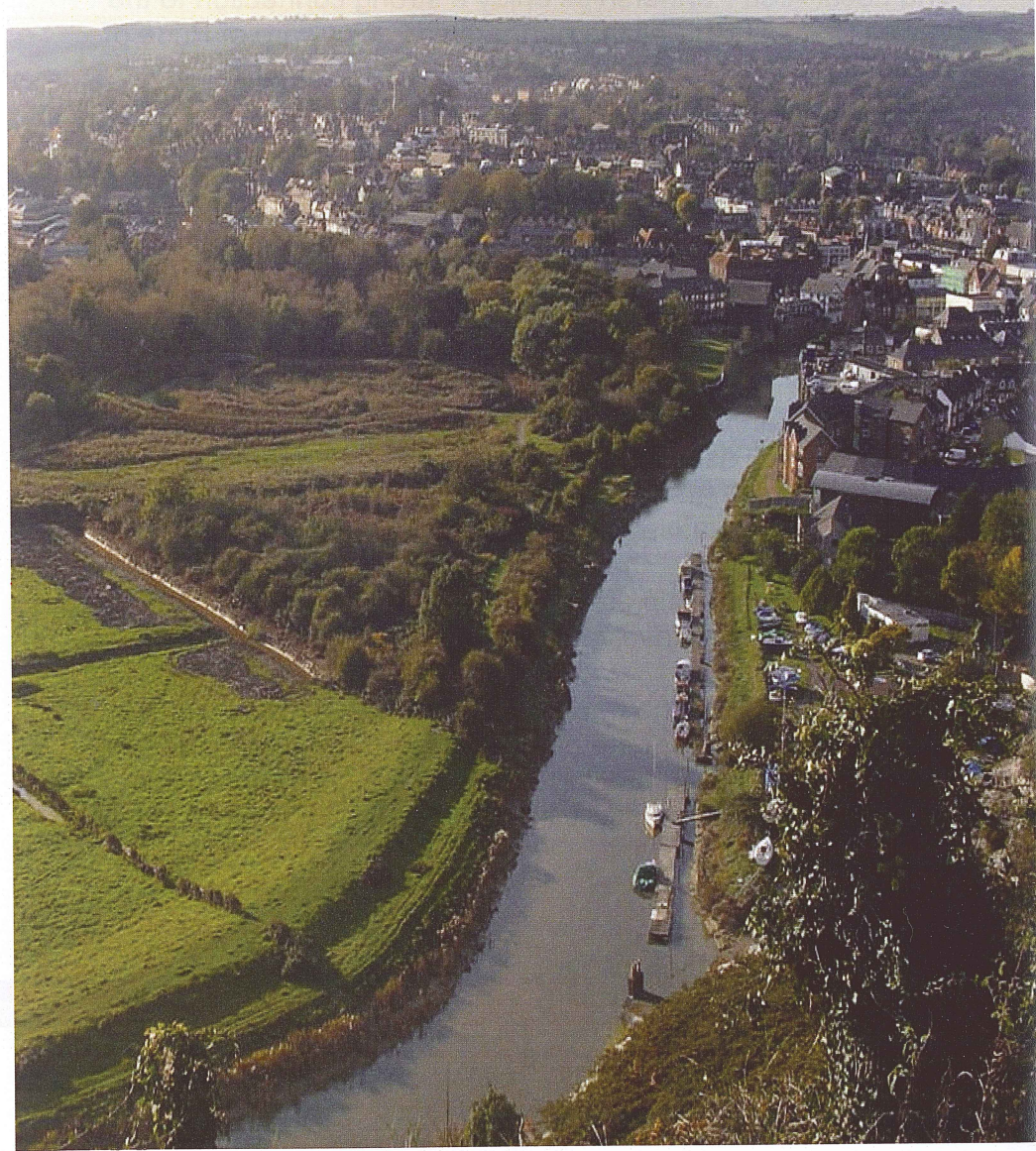
## Lewes District Strategic Partnership

### The Impact

The Local Area Partnerships enjoy a strong connection to the Lewes District LSP - all the partnerships are aware of Pride of Place, the sustainable community strategy for East Sussex, and the Local Area Agreement as one of its action plans. Part of the LSP Coordinator's role has been to map the priorities developed by the Local Area Partnerships and show how much their local project work is contributing to the achievement of the wider objectives within Pride of Place.

Each partnership works to its own local priorities, which has allowed each one to focus their resources on the specific needs of their local community. Being limited companies, the Local Area Partnerships have developed their own strong identity, as well as being able to seek funding, and hold money. The partnerships also provide a mechanism for local accountability because they are required to publish annual accounts and returns, they also enjoy a much stronger, formal status as a partnership as there are specific posts and commitments for all involved.

In the 6 years since the Lewes Local Area Partnerships have been set up, several of the partnerships have bid for, and been successful in, gaining funding for local projects. The Seaford Local Area Partnership, for instance, developed a heritage trail






## Lewes District Strategic Partnership

around the town involving local artists and the installation of heritage boards at key locations in the town to provide information for visitors. The REGEN partnership in Peacehaven, however, has focused on young people in the area and after successful project bids the partnership has built a youth shelter and refurbished the local youth centre.

One of the barriers in the early days was the capacity of the partnerships, where the people involved did not necessarily have the expertise or experience of seeking funding or managing projects. Specific funding was originally provided for Local Area Partnerships development workers who were able to work with each partnership and support their work, however this funding has recently come to an end and this will pose a number of challenges for each of the area partnerships.

The Local Area Partnerships have enabled local concerns to be captured on a more geographic basis than had previously been achieved. They also provided a consultation mechanism for developing Pride of Place, the sustainable community strategy in East Sussex. Lewes District Local Strategic Partnership and Lewes District Council continue to use them to consult on a range of issues and initiatives.



Each of the five Local Area Partnership chairs sit on the LSP, alongside chairs of the themed partnerships, which provides clear links up to and down from the LSP. Furthermore, all the Local Area Partnership chairs have started meeting together as a Partnership Steering Group to improve communication between the different partnerships and support their future development.





## Lessons Learnt

- The biggest challenge was making sure that rural areas are properly represented where there may be one town council but a large number of parish councils e.g. the Rural Voices, Rural Choices partnership
- To always make sure that resources are being used as efficiently as possible since LSPs do not receive set funding, as opposed to some statutory partnerships
- To encourage and support representation from town and parish councils as well as individuals and groups
- To have a flexible approach to establishing Local Area Partnerships so that their development reflects the needs of the local area

## Contact

Carina Hinkley  
Lewes District Local Strategic Partnership  
Southover House  
Southover Road  
Lewes  
East Sussex  
BN7 9EZ

01273 484 336

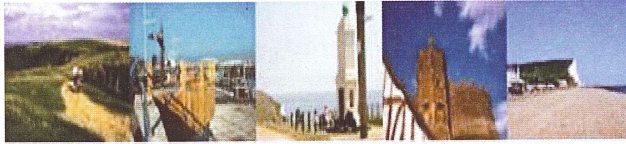
[lvlc@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:lvlc@lewes.gov.uk)

## Further Information

For more information on the Lewes Local Area Partnerships, please visit the Lewes District Local Strategic Partnership website at [www.lvlc.info](http://www.lvlc.info).



## Lewes District Strategic Partnership



Lewes District Strategic Partnership

**Lewes Strategic Partnership**

[www.lvlc.info](http://www.lvlc.info)

01273 484396

[lvlc@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:lvlc@lewes.gov.uk)