



Local Strategic Partnerships and the Sustainable Community Strategy in East Sussex

What are they and why should I be interested?

The Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to ensure the preparation of a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), with a vision for improving and promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. Local Authorities are expected to prepare the SCS in partnership with other local organisations and agencies and recommends that they do this by establishing a Local Strategic Partnership.

A Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a non-statutory, multi-agency body which aims to bring together at a local level the key organisations from different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. These organisations are also referred to as 'partners'. They need to be able to work collaboratively together, sharing knowledge and resources where appropriate to bring about an improvement in services, and in particular to look at addressing issues that cross geographical and agency boundaries. In East Sussex there are six LSPs one covering each district and borough area and one for the county.

After around five years of each LSP having its own Community Strategy, it was agreed, early in 2007, to develop an integrated SCS based on real evidence. Most of the issues identified by local people are common across the county; however the priorities for improvement and the degree of the issue vary from area to area. 'Pride of Place' is the new SCS for East Sussex; it outlines a long term vision through to 2026 - *to create places where everyone can prosper, be safe and healthy, and live in a high quality environment*. It includes eleven countywide chapters, each covering a specific theme such as education, learning and skills, all based on real evidence; and five chapters outlining the specific priorities for each district and borough area.

Having a vision of how things should be in our communities is not enough; that vision needs to be turned into reality. There are a number of action plans that help achieve this.

The first is the Local Area Agreement (LAA). This is a 3 year agreement between the Government and local partners in East Sussex which links national and local priorities and matches these with 'up to 35' performance indicators from the Government's new National Indicator Set. Challenging targets for improvement are then set for each indicator.

Many other priorities are not easily measured by the National Indicator Set, or measurable improvement may take longer than the three years of the LAA. These priorities will be included in Local Action Plans, either at county level, where a joined up approach adds value, at the local district and borough level or more locally through, for example, Parish or Neighbourhood Plans. Delivering priorities locally is further strengthened by partners including specific actions in their own business plans. In addition, the districts and boroughs are each responsible for developing a Local Development Framework (LDF) for their area. The LDFs replace the previous Structure Plans for the area; they outline the spatial requirements of the SCS, that is – how much development is needed; where it should be located; and what infrastructure services are needed to support it.

Membership of the different LSPs varies to suit local circumstances, but each include representatives from the relevant Local Authority, the County Council, Health, the Police or crime reduction partnership, the business sector through representative groups such as the Federation of Small Businesses or Chamber of Commerce; and representatives of voluntary organisations and the community sector, often represented by community networks. Other members represented on some but not all LSPs across East Sussex include the Fire Service, Environment Agency, Sussex Association of Local Councils (representing parishes), faith communities, youth council representatives, farming representatives and housing providers.

My local community has issues they want addressed, how do I get them raised?

There are a number of ways of raising issues of local concern. You can work with your local parish council or neighbourhood forum to highlight particular issues of local concern and seek to get them included within a Parish or Neighbourhood Plan; these may be able to be resolved locally or may need raising with a specific agency or at a partnership such as the local LSP. Issues that require financial resources to resolve will need to be considered through the normal prioritisation and budget setting processes of relevant agencies. However, issues can often be resolved by a creative partnership approach rather than through the need for additional resources.

LSP meetings are held in public, you may wish to check the website of the relevant LSP to find out the date of the next meeting. Whilst issues are not normally raised from the floor, you can discuss with the co-ordinator for the LSP the best way for your issue to be considered.

Why bother - what difference have LSPs made?

There are many examples of the added value that has been achieved by working in partnership through the LSPs, below are some examples:

East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP)

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The ESSP has worked over the past two years to develop and deliver a LAA that addresses issues known to be of concern to local people and that require a partnership approach to delivery. Some of the successes include:

- 20% reduction in crimes against an 18.2% three year target
- waste reduction and recycling initiatives leading to an estimated 2,018 tonnes less, non biodegradable waste going to landfill
- 2,538 households across the county were kept warm in winter through an increase in the take up of grants towards household fuel bills
- in 2006/07 14,034 people received services from a range of partners during the year that enabled them to live independently at home
- 101 schools achieved Healthy School status in one year across East Sussex, and
- 250 new businesses set up in Eastbourne, and 175 set up in Hastings during 2006/07.



East Sussex Strategic Partnership

Eastbourne Strategic Partnership (ESP)

DEVONSHIRE PROJECT

This was agreed by the ESP in 2004 to look at the issues in the most deprived ward in Eastbourne. This included mapping the baseline socio-economic data and population profile of Devonshire Ward, highlighting gaps in services and identifying what the community wants. The study provides lessons in joint working that can be rolled out for the benefit of other neighbourhoods in Eastbourne. A neighbourhood worker has been employed and a neighbourhood action plan has been developed.



Eastbourne Strategic Partnership
working together

Hastings & St Leonard's LSP

AREA COORDINATION

In 2006 Area Coordination was launched which is a new way for service providers, residents and local councillors to work together to ensure that services meet the needs of individual neighbourhoods. Under this new approach service provision within Hastings and St Leonard's is organised around 4 areas, each containing four wards. The aim of this new way of working is to help to narrow the gap in quality of life between neighbourhoods. The priorities are to tackle crime and raise levels of education, health, and employment and improve housing and environmental standards across the town, focusing on the areas in need of most improvement. Each of the four areas has a strategic board that allows residents and other partners to work together towards achieving improvements in the area.



Lewes District LSP - Local Voices Local Choices

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Lewes District LSP has established five local partnerships within the district to address very local issues. There are four town based Area Partnerships in Seaford, Lewes Town, Peacehaven & Telscombe and Newhaven and a rural partnership - Rural Voices Rural Choices.



The LSP has paid for three development workers who undertake projects on behalf of the partnerships, these have included: improvements to a number of play areas and nature reserves in the District in consultation with local communities including providing disabled access; development of an 'Our Newhaven' website aimed at building a real history of the town through the memories, pictures and stories of local people and rugby taster sessions and other diversionary activities have been held for young people in Peacehaven and Telscombe.

Rother Local Strategic Partnership

ROTHER LOCAL ACTION PLANS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Rother Local Action Plans Support Programme commenced in August 2005 and runs until March 2009 and is delivering support to local communities in the Rother area, including rural and urban communities, wishing to consider, develop or implement Local Action Plans (sometimes called 'Parish Plans').



Rother LSP is committed to supporting communities to work together to produce inclusive plans, which embrace issues of importance to local people, whether it be the number of litter bins in the parish, a major development for affordable housing or a youth club. The important element of this new way of working is that all people within a local community are encouraged to take part and contribute to the final Action Plan and be party to taking forward actions identified through extensive consultation with local people.

The published Action Plan means that local voices are heard within public sector agencies such as local government, the Police and Health authorities.

Wealden LSP Wealden Voices, Wealden Choices

THE WEALDEN LINKS PROJECT

This action research project, funded by the Carnegie Trust, is led by Action in Rural Sussex, on behalf of LSP partners and local communities. It aims to explore how elements of community-led plans can feed into statutory plans, for example, the Local Development Framework, and other strategies to influence development and other activity in practice. Four parishes have engaged with the project and the issues they have identified form the basis of ongoing project work at meetings in each community.



Those communities affected by proposed new housing development have focused on the planning process, developing projects that relate to the use of developer contributions to address pressure on infrastructure and traffic volumes. Other issues identified have been activities for young and older people and a need for community transport. Two participant communities want to develop new capital build projects such as a community and health centre. One parish is opting to form a local action team to oversee issues relating to a housing development and associated infrastructure, drawn together by their District Councillor. Another has decided to focus on one issue at a time and have chosen to develop project plans for a new recreation facility for young people. A template has also been developed to help all Wealden communities match their priorities with the emerging priorities in statutory plans to make clear links with their own community action plans.

Where can I find out more about my local LSP

East Sussex	www.essp.org.uk
Eastbourne	www.eastbourne.gov.uk
Hastings	www.hastings.gov.uk/lsp
Lewes	www.lvlc.info
Rother	www.rother.gov.uk/lsp
Wealden	www.wealdencommunitystrategy.co.uk

