

Meeting of South Hams Community Partnership Forum
Monday 20th June 2005
Ivybridge Town Hall

1. Welcome

Ruth Bagley, as chair of the South Hams Strategic Partnership, welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda for the morning which would focus on progress against the key themes set out in the South Hams Community Strategy, an update on the Sherford new community and a communication workshop.

2. Update / Sign Off Reports on Project Themes by Project Champions - Summary of Achievements attached.

a) **Accessible Services & Supporting Active and Caring Communities**

Roger Grainger highlighted the importance of a joined-up approach to the provision of services and the importance of e-government. He also noted the importance of self-help and giving communities the confidence to develop local services. These Action Plans were 'signed off' as being completed to the best of the working groups ability.

b) **Affordable Housing**

Lee Bray stressed that significant research had been carried out to understand the nature of the affordable housing and homelessness problem in the South Hams and that the South Hams may be chosen as one of two pilots for Housing Market Assessment in the region. However, the scale of need means that there is still a great deal to be done to address the problem.

c) **Employment & Skills**

Michael Cozens reported that progress had been made in improving communications with the business community and links with local training providers, which had had a positive affect on reducing the skills gap. He highlighted that the South Hams had the highest rate of start up businesses in the county between 2001 and 2004, although he acknowledged that there were signs emerging of a slight slow down of the economy.

3. Sherford New Community Update - presentation by Alan Robinson. Outlined the origins of Sherford, how the concept has changed and recent progress, including the involvement of the Prince's Foundation and the Enquiry by Design workshops. His key message was that Sherford will happen, that development is likely to begin in only two years time, that stakeholders should get involved now and that we all need to work together to ensure its success as a community.

4. Improving our Understanding & Communication Workshop

Ruth Bagley set the context for the workshop by explaining that members of the South Hams Strategic Partnership had attended a workshop under the umbrella of the Devon Improvement Programme which has received ODPM money to analyse partnership working.

Kay Dawson recapped on the 2003 vision for the Community Strategy and asked the room to split into small groups and discuss the following three key questions. Each group then fed back the results of their discussions:

Q1 How has the current structure helped the Partnership achieve what we set out to achieve in the Community Strategy?

- Better knowledge and information - 'shared values'
- Bottom-up to identify issues
- Focused management support – 'LSP Steering Group'
- Champions – but they need support
- Transport Partnership Group has good links with project champion
- It is a start! (Reference to the learning process for LSPs)

Q2 How could the structure of the Partnership enable engagement and delivery?

- Who are all the partners and do we know what each other does?
- Are the relevant people present?
- Team effort

- Perception it is too focused on 'SHDC'
- Team agenda - not individual agendas
- Independent chair would be good - rotating annually / 2 - 3 years
- Identifying priority leads / champions
- Champions don't need to be a senior person - needs to be someone with time / commitment to push projects forward

- Need clarity on accountability
- Boundary setting for forums
- Good management of decision making process

- Need nucleus team - representation of wide range / interests
- Need linkage between various groups / forums
- Two-way information flows

- Acknowledge that 'the community' is varied and diverse - difficult to get everyone together in one room - need to use a wider range of existing forums and groups
- It needs to be more accessible (use of jargon, locations)
- Partnership training (being developed by SHCVS for voluntary sector representatives)

Q.3 How can the Partnership members **communicate** better with each other and the 'outside world'?

- Meeting agenda is too broad
- Have a more specific focus to meetings with time for discussion
- Short snappy focused information
- Need to focus and specialise when communicating
- Change meeting format from 'theatre' layout (presentation to audience) to 'round table' layout (engagement and contribution)
- Feedback to our committees / boards

- Need own logo branding - why SHDC logo being used?
- Need updated Community Strategy document

- More frequent news bulletins needed to keep each other updated on our activities, achievements, upcoming meeting etc
- Keep all members of Partnership updated on the projects with up to date contact details of key players
- More regular briefings and updates needed, especially in advance of meetings
- E-bulletin with diary of events
- Effective use of technology

- Need communication / information champion or co-ordinator
- Effective co-ordination of information
- Accuracy of information
- Need named contacts
- Single source to 'outside world'
- Use the right language (not 'vision', 'strategy' etc)
- Engage more with local media with focused news stories which have relevance

Ruth Bagley thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.