

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER, 2006

REVIEW OF EAST DURHAM LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE, PETER RICHARDS, GROUNDWORK EAST DURHAM AND CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT SUB GROUP – ENVIRONMENT SUB GROUP

(I) What was the role of the Sub Group within the LSP and which Members/Officers from the District Council supported it?

P Richards explained that there had been an outstanding change in performance over the last three years. Previously they had been in the bottom quartile but this had now changed dramatically and was down to efforts of the District Council rather than the group. Councillor G Patterson, the Executive Member for Liveability sat on the Environment Group and Officer representation included the Liveability Officer and the Sustainability Officer who had both recently left the authority to take up new posts. Emma Coates from the Regeneration Team also attended regularly. The group also had very good community attendance. In the new year, a partnership event was to be held to encourage Officers and Members of the Community Empowerment Network to engage with the group more.

(II) Where had the Sub-Group been most and least effective so far?

P Richards explained that a major strength was consultation with the community and examples of this included Minewater treatment, the Urban Rural Renaissance Initiative and the Local Development Framework. A number of service improvements for the community had taken place which included Dawdon Community Centre, Edenhill shop fronts, Eastlea Community Centre, Oak Road Neighbourhood Park.

P Richards explained that the least effective was authority representation and there was a problem in getting the right people to attend. Priorities for communities could be delivered but there needed to be different authorities working better together to take projects forward.

(III) Are the LSP Sub Groups equally as effective in terms of structure and outcomes?

P Richards explained that the Sub Groups were probably not equally as effective as each other. Some groups had statutory responsibility so they were more effective than the voluntary in nature.

(IV) How does the LSP ensure that full benefits of sharing data and information between partners is obtained?

P Richards explained that the LSP was good at community consultation but not so good at maximising inter authority collaboration. The LSP was more about partnerships and if

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structures were brought in to codify the approach then this would change the nature of the LSP.

(V) **What steps could the LSP take to ensure wider involvement in its work?**

P Richards explained that more authority involvement was the key issue.

(VI) **The LSP should be accountable to the community for its work. How is accountability achieved, measured and reported back to the community? Was the membership of the LSP and its Sub Groups reflective of the community?**

P Richards explained that he thought the LSP was good at being accountable to the community. There was service improvement involvement, feedback and review although this was unmeasured evaluation at a strategic level.

(VII) **How effective was the LSP communicating its achievements/non-achievements and those of the Sub Group?**

P Richards explained that the LSP TV was used and filming was currently taking place using items from the Environment Group for the LSP TV. The Eddies awarded a person nominated who made a difference to the community. Last years winner Rhona Hardy was from Shotton.

(VIII) **What arrangements were in place within the Sub Group to report upon its activities and what were the reporting mechanisms from the sub group to the LSP?**

P Richards explained that there was a quarterly reporting mechanism although an annual reporting mechanism was better for the Environment Group. Feedback was also given to the full LSP and the Executive of the LSP.

(IX) **How effective was the LSP and the Sub Groups at raising awareness of its activities to partner organisations and the community?**

P Richards explained that they were effective amongst themselves in the environment and community sectors. He added that it was difficult to engage people who were not interested in the environment.